

FAITH AND FREEDOM



A JOURNAL OF
PROGRESSIVE RELIGION

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FAITH AND FREEDOM

A JOURNAL OF PROGRESSIVE RELIGION

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THE policy of this Journal, apart from the exposition of a free and progressive faith, is to provide a bridge of understanding across the Atlantic for the ministers and laity of our movement. In doing this it also provides a bridge between the more advanced and the more conservative wings of our movement on both sides of the ocean.

The present Theist-Humanist discussion is a case in point. What is suprising is that, apart from several strongly appreciative comments on Mr. Mason's exposition of a humanist's faith, the Editor has not received any contributions from America in support of the humanist point of view even after Mr. Mason had been subjected to some criticism.

Let it be noted that Mr. Mason's faith in man was not challenged. It was mainly in what he denied, or seemed to deny, that he was criticized. There was implicit and explicit endorsement of his moral idealism within the human scene, and even of his near-perfectionist goal for humanity. Only when he sought justification for rejecting a theistic faith was it objected that, as far as liberal theism was concerned, he was tilting at windmills.

But Mr. Mason is a working minister who knows that the majority of the Unitarian laity (and even some ministers) are still held back at some point to the thought-forms and ideas of orthodox and traditional theism. The enfranchisement is often incomplete and some of the more mature insights into the nature of God are, frankly speaking, beyond the experience of not a few of our laity. This is no reflection on them but it creates a perpetual problem for the minister whose job it is to provide for the moral and spiritual growth of his people, young and old, and sometimes at several mental age-levels at once. Cases of arrested religious development are amongst the most difficult with which he has to deal. Arrested development is witnessed, sometimes in an acute form, in a church which has a great tradition behind it. If that tradition is held to be embodied in a characteristic form of worship, the peculiar genius of our free religion is likely to be stultified. The freedom of the pulpit may still be vindicated, at least in theory, but the minister is only too keenly aware that the whole act of worship is being held in chains to ideas, phrases and forms which are not even true to the growing child-mind in the midst. For this reason the iconoclasm of the religious humanist is to be welcomed. It has forced and is forcing Unitarians to rethink their idea of God in a way which they have probably not done since the religious controversies of the nineteenth century. But it does not, and should not be expected to destroy any man's belief in God unless that belief is based on hearsay or effete notions.

The more mature theistic minds amongst us have long since given up the belief that God intervenes directly in the space-time

universe. He is an effective agency known directly only in the hearts and minds of men. This whole theological and spiritual revolution, making God a subjective reality, is summed up in James Martineau's great hymn: "Where is your God?" they say. Read it and see for yourself. Most English readers may not know that John H. Deitrich, the "father" of Modern American humanism said "I believe in God; I don't use the word often because it is so easily misinterpreted, but if I can define the word myself, I believe in God. Humanism does not exclude the idea of God." To the mature liberal mind there is no quarrel.

Observing from a somewhat detached viewpoint, it has always seemed quite natural that humanism should thrive in the New World with its extraversional pursuits and empirical approach to life generally. America's outstanding philosophers have been William James and John Dewey. Pragmatism and Instrumentalism are both essentially empirical and support an activist and extraversional type of life. Transformed by moral idealism into a religious outlook there has arisen a faith in "a faith that works" and which is justified by works. This faith is dominated by an ideal goal which is indistinguishable from what the up-to-date Christian would still call the kingdom of God on earth. But the humanist would rely solely on human agency to achieve that goal and sets out with vigorous urgency to select and pursue intermediate and achievable goals on the way. The splendid humanist affirmations and aims, and the implications of those aims, in current humanist literature, are such as to stir the heart of every liberal religious man who also knows that the sincere attempt to live out one's faith requires that proximate goals must be selected and the policy for achieving those goals re-thought and re-stated by every generation.

But the value of humanist ideals is illusory if they are not served by men dedicated to their realization. Religious humanism can, least of all religious movements, escape the pragmatic test which is bound up with its own empirical outlook. "By their fruits ye shall know them" was spoken by Jesus, the Master of empirical idealism.

Jesus, however, is not to be accounted for as just an extraverted activist enthusiastically pursuing ameliorative social goals in preparation for a Kingdom of God on earth. His judgments and reactions to his fellow-men and to everyday human situations sprang from a profound introverted self-knowledge and self-awareness, and in the depths of his own soul he found the Other whom he revealed by his life as the all-loving Father. The experience of God as love is the fount and origin of all that we instinctively recognise in Christianity as true for our own lives and the lives of all men everywhere. Without it the testimony of his life and of all Christ-like lives, whether nominally Christian or not, is meaningless. Moreover, love provides of itself the one efficient motive force for all our ideals for human well-being and betterment.

The clarion-call quality of Humanism lies in its proclamation of faith in man, but the motive force which makes that faith work

as a regenerating revolution in human society is love and nothing but love. The real strength of humanism is therefore in its love of man and in the self-effacing devotion which it generates in man for man's sake, for humanity's sake, for fellowship's sake. "Forsooth, Brothers, fellowship is heaven and lack of fellowship is hell: and the deeds that ye do upon earth, it is for fellowship's sake that ye do them."

Our own F. W. Newman, brother of Cardinal Newman, in his *Theism* speaks this truth succinctly: "Heart-worship, not head-worship, makes a man's religion."

So also with theism; without love theistic religion is but a cold, abstract theology, powerless to move men's lives except to cower in fear before a God of might who knows no mercy and whose worship can beget nought but distrust, hatred and violence on earth. With love at its heart theism becomes authentic religion, surging through the arteries of life, giving meaning to life itself, motivating forgiveness and carrying the self beyond itself in selfless devotion to the true, the good, the beautiful and the holy in life. Love is the quality of the only life worth living, and the motive of the only deed worth doing. All religions, humanist or theistic, turn out to be sham, and their votaries hypocritical, if the worship they offer and the service they give be not motivated by love.

What makes Jesus, Socrates, the Buddha and other great ones the avatars of true religion if it be not the depth of their compassion?

If we are right in identifying the worshipping humanist as the sincere religious extravert and the worshipping theist as the sincere introvert, it follows that each should see in the other his own other-self, for, according to Jung's verifiable insight, the subconscious of the extravert is introverted, and that of the introvert is extraverted.

The mature personality, which some call the integrated personality, is never one which is strongly biased towards either extraversion or introversion. Rather is it poised and able to move now into meaningful extraversional activity and then to withdraw and turn within for introverted thought. This is to know both "why" and "how": it is to know when to be abased and when to abound, to glimpse the grand strategy of life and to play a meaningful part in applying the tactics.

The weakness of the theist is, all too often that he takes his worship of God to be the be-all and end-all of religion. He cries "Lord, Lord" but does not the will of his Father. But the humanist has his weakness too, for whatever else he knows, he never knows his own soul. Being an activist he is likely to be eminently social and therefore to detest solitude. But neither theist nor humanist can be happy without the experience of love in his life, though they each react differently to it. One is content to tend the flame in his own soul while the other must light his torch and carry it forth to lighten the dark places of the earth. One says "the kingdom of heaven is within you, in the eternal now"; the other says "the

kingdom is amongst you on earth as brethren one of another." Are not these two complementary statements which each man should earnestly try to work out, oriented now to the realm of being and becoming and then to the realm of doing and creating? As Blake would say: "they are not negations of each other but contraries, and without contraries there is no progress."

Few men are extreme in their bias towards one side or the other, and no extremists are likely to be members of our churches. Only the extreme extravert will never turn his attention to causes, purposes, motives and the meaning of existence. And only the extreme introvert will cut himself off from the world of things and people, of acts and deeds, from human relationships, the amelioration of human ills and the redress of human wrongs. Between these two extremes are the vast majority of men and women, but all of them needing to find that central poise which will enable them to live their own completeness.

The relevance of this for Unitarian worship should be obvious. The very fact that a humanist feels the need for worship (or for a religious service if he still balks at the word worship) is itself an indication that there is a felt need for introversion and that he cannot altogether lift himself by his own shoe-strings but must come to fuller knowledge of himself and the hitherto hidden depths of his own being. That the devout theistic worshipper knows that he must endeavour to act out his vision and express the truth that is in him is an indication that there is a need for extraversional participation in the achievement of realisable, ideal goals, that the goodwill may become deed. The movement of our worship should be as Dr. van Ogden Vogt has had inscribed over his church-door: "Up from the world of the many to the over-world of the One," and then—"Back to the world of the many to fulfil the life of the One." In the worship which lies between, the humanist needs fortifying by a stronger grasp on the unseen and eternal: the theist needs fortifying in his resolution to do the deed that most needs doing.

There is nothing wrong with religious humanism unless it claims to mediate the whole of a mature religion. And there is nothing wrong with religious theism unless it claims that true belief and the truth of worship is sufficient for the salvation of mankind. So many have seen these errors in themselves, have struggled to overcome them and have found their maturity through that struggle. If Unitarian worship can be led by those who have the insights belonging to such maturity and can provide the conditions not only of tolerance but of sympathetic goodwill towards those who are still partisan in their protestations, our contribution towards resolving the crisis in our world will be far from negligible.

The mature religious personality is capable of complete and wholehearted dedication to the humanist goal of mankind on earth, while at the same time tending the fire of the spirit within his own soul by an ever fuller self-understanding and an ever deeper grasp on the eternal.

The Relevance of Theism

ARTHUR J. LONG*

IN this paper it will be shown that the hypothesis of God is indispensable to a proper understanding of the universe and a vital necessity for the effective interpretation and presentation of our faith. I choose the word "hypothesis" advisedly. Although there are those who believe that the existence of God can be demonstrated with absolute certainty, theism ought properly to be regarded as being in the nature of hypothesis, a highly probable inference based on reason and experience, furnishing the most logical and satisfactory explanation of the universe. Theism is first and foremost an attempt to explain the universe. As W. R. Sorley has said: "The problem which confronts us should not be put in the form 'Does God exist?' but rather in the form 'How is the universe to be understood and interpreted?'"¹ It is important that this be borne in mind, for some humanist attempts to discredit theism seem quite content to leave unresolved the problem of the universe. They urge us to reject God, to make man the measure of all things but, on the fundamental problem of the nature and destiny of man and of the universe in which he finds himself, they have singularly little to say—or perhaps it would be more correct to say that the little they have to say is peculiarly uninspiring and philosophically unconvincing. Theism does not say simply "There is a God." It affirms that the hypothesis of a supreme loving Intelligence, creating, guiding and moulding all things, and working out eternal purposes within the time process is the most satisfactory explanation of the universe in which we find ourselves.

My purpose is to establish the *relevance* of theism. Apart from the Marxists and the declining band of secularists and militant atheists there are few nowadays who reject theism entirely and dogmatically. But there are very many who consider theism to be entirely irrelevant to modern needs. The man in the street who believes in a Supreme Being, but who does nothing about it, and does not allow the belief to affect his life in the slightest degree, presumably considers theism irrelevant. So do the humanists. Indeed, to judge from Leonard Mason, humanism bases its case on an open recognition of the alleged fact that, to all intents and purposes, most men are quite content to ignore God.²

An influential school of modern philosophy, logical positivism, also finds theism irrelevant, on the ground that all metaphysical

* This paper was read at the Ministers' Conference at Great Hucklow, Sept, 1956. Personal note on page 89.

¹ *Gifford Lectures*—Bouquet, I, p. 23.

² *The Challenge of Humanism*. This journal, Vol. 9, Pt. 2 (No. 26), p. 73 ff.

statements are in essence non-sense—mere words, without any valid connotation. Such propositions as “God exists” or “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth” are put on a par with such statements as “The square root of minus two is blue” or “chimney pots are very fond of fish and chips.” To me it seems self-evident that the statement “The universe is the creation of a loving God” is *not* on a par with “The garbage can gave birth to a quadratic equation.” The latter cannot be argued about or discussed, the former most certainly can. I am discussing it in this paper, and I am not prepared to admit that the discussion is altogether meaningless. Logical positivism stigmatizes metaphysical statements because it insists that they cannot be verified—or more precisely that a method of verification cannot be envisaged. But it will be part of my case to maintain that theistic statements *can* be verified—or at any rate, that they are as much capable of verification as any other empirical hypothesis. If it be argued that this sort of verification will not satisfy the logical positivist, then one can only suppose that they must live peculiarly isolated lives. If they find meaning only in statements capable of logical verification, they are presumably unable to accept the existence of the external world or of other selves.

The only thing to be said for the logical positivist's attack on theism is that it does serve to remind us that the fundamental question is not “Is there a God?”—but, “what sort of God?” To say that God exists may not be entirely meaningless, but it does not tell us very much until we have defined the term “God.” This is clearly of considerable importance, for the God whom Leonard Mason attacks bears little or no relation to the God of the intelligent liberal theist.

If the logical positivist is only asking us to define our terms, we will thank him for his assistance. But so long as he insists on putting up notices saying “No Thoroughfare,” we will ignore his advice and drive on.

We pass to a consideration of the challenge of humanism, the challenge most likely to be encountered in the interpretation and presentation of our faith. Taking Mason's paper as a typical statement of the humanist position, there appear to be two considerations of importance. In the first place, the idea of God which it envisages and attacks is singularly naïve and old-fashioned. In the second place, there is the point already mentioned in this paper: If humanists reject theism, what other explanation of the universe do they offer?

To take first the question of the nature of the God whose existence is being debated, it might very well be argued that humanism, far from being modern, is a survival of Victorian rationalism. Many of Mason's scathing strictures remind one of those critics of the Bible whom one still comes across, who seems blissfully unaware that all but a small minority of Christians now accept the findings of Higher Criticism. For example: “In our intellectual

judgments," says Mason, "we think atheistically, believing that everything has a reason or an explanation which is natural, rational and logical, though we may not yet have discovered it."³ This statement is frankly astounding. Since when has the belief that everything has a reason or an explanation ruled out the idea of God? For the orthodox, the superstitious and the traditionalists maybe, but surely not for the intelligent liberal! God himself is the ground of reason and the principle of causality, and to suppose that God is only to be found in the irrational and the incomprehensible is the supreme mark of religious immaturity.

Again, Mason says that "Life is understood as the slow growth of primitive cells whose origin biochemistry and biophysics are on the way to elucidating."³ So what? This does not rule out God. On the contrary, the unfolding of the story of life is meaningless without God, and by this I do *not* mean that the emergence of life on this planet is evidence of divine intervention. A theism which has to postulate intervention is doomed from the start. I am quite ready to believe that animate nature has evolved from inanimate and that, sooner or later, scientists will discover the secret of life. But for me, the whole field of nature, whether organic or inorganic, is an expression of the being of God, and wholly incomprehensible without Him. As C. E. Raven says "this is a world alive, transparent, sacramental; the work of God, the object of His love, the body of His indwelling."⁴ According to Mason, theism, if persisted in, can only end in a new Deism. In actual fact, it is obvious that the theism which he envisages is already a deism of the most naïve order, a deism of two worlds—God in the supernatural, intervening occasionally to manipulate the natural. A brief glance at some words by John Macmurray should serve to establish once for all the essential futility of the doctrine of the two worlds, so commonly but so erroneously assumed to be the corollary of theism: "It is one thing to realize that the world in which we live is wider and deeper than we know, and that there may be whole reaches of it and aspects of it which are hidden from our normal consciousness. It is quite another thing to hold that there is another world which is not this world at all. It is one thing to say that religion is about the other world. It is a very different thing to say that it is about an aspect of this world to which we are normally blind. The first statement is a falsification of religion which makes it unreal. The second is the truth of real religion."⁵

Macmurray speaks elsewhere of those who scan the skies with a telescope, searching frantically for interstices through which to let God into His Universe. For those who believe in a sacramental universe, no activity can be more futile, and a humanism which appears to imagine that this is the characteristic activity of theism can hardly be expected to be taken seriously.

3 *Ibid.*, p. 82.

4 *Good News of God*, p. 49

5 *Structure of Religious Experience*, p. 100-1.

So much for humanist misconceptions concerning the nature of theism. The other respect in which humanism is deficient is its failure to offer a convincing alternative to theism. Theism and humanism are not simple opposites. Theism is an alternative explanation of the universe and humanism is not—unless we are supposed to assume that humanism implies agnosticism on metaphysical issues. But this is not explicitly stated in Mason's paper, and it is pertinent to ask what theory of the universe he would advocate.

A. C. Bouquet, in his *Modern Handbooks on Religion* lists no less than eleven possible explanations of reality: materialism, dialectical materialism, monism, mentalistic atheism, reverent agnosticism, pluralism, dualism, pantheism, deism, theism, and evolutionary spiritualism (i.e. emergent evolution). One suspects that most humanists would plump for mentalistic atheism, reverent agnosticism, or evolutionary spiritualism—but whatever their choice, they would presumably argue that they accept the scientific view of the universe, with the evolutionary hypothesis. They would accept whole-heartedly the philosophic conclusions of Julian Huxley in his standard work *Evolution—the Modern Synthesis* and in his brief but significant essay on *The Uniqueness of Man*. Man, says Huxley, is the culmination of the process of evolution; the only being in whom evolution is continuing. Man must devote himself therefore to the enjoyment of beauty, the achievement of goodness and efficiency, the furtherance of all those unique characteristics with which evolution has endowed him.

The rational theist will not object to this as far as it goes. But is it really a satisfactory explanation of the universe? What is the *meaning* of evolution, and *why* has it resulted in man? Huxley (and presumably the humanists) insist that there is no design or purpose in evolution, other than what we put into it. But is it not a little fantastic to suggest that the unique course of human evolution—and nobody could be more emphatic in describing its uniqueness than Huxley—that this unique phenomenon just happened by chance? Surely evolution is meaningless unless it is recognized as an expression of the purpose of a loving Intelligence embodying within His own Person, from the beginning, those values which are now manifest in man? Humanism, in short, is meaningless unless it presupposes theism.

We pass now to a brief consideration of the more positive case for theism. It will be remembered that I have defined theism as first and foremost an hypothesis. It will be obvious therefore that I do not set much store by the traditional theistic proofs which, when all is said and done, always seem to produce God in much the same way as the conjurer produces the rabbit from the hat. When the Scholastic philosopher has finished his trick, God is there all right, definitely and unmistakable, and every bit as objective as the rabbit. But just as we know perfectly well that it was the conjuror himself who, at some stage in the performance, introduced the rabbit

into the hat without our noticing, so also we are quite convinced that it was the philosopher who surreptitiously introduced God. To put the matter less flippantly and more exactly, the traditional proofs start with the assumption of the existence of Deity, and then proceed to prove the truth of the assumption. This type of argument can hardly be expected to convince those who, like the humanist, are unwilling to make the initial assumption. They will insist on regarding the whole procedure as a "stupendous semantic tyranny"—to quote Leonard Mason again.

The road to theism then, does not lie through the traditional proofs. The only really convincing form of theism is that grounded in an empirical estimation of the universe in which we find ourselves. "The classical proofs of the being of God" says Dr. F. R. Tennant, "sought to demonstrate that there is a Real counterpart to a pre-conceived idea of God. . . . The empirically-minded theologian adopts a different procedure. He asks how the world, inclusive of man, is to be explained. He would let the actual world tell its own story and offer its own suggestions. . . . All that he can expect to emerge from his enquiry are grounds for reasonable belief rather than rational and coercive demonstration. Should this seem a mean ambition for the theologian, we need but recall that other selves, as to whose existence each of us has an unshakable conviction, and whose works we can understand or explain only by using teleological categories, are neither directly apprehended nor probable otherwise than by cumulative pragmatic verification."⁶ Professor Eric Waterhouse adopts a similar standpoint. "The existence of God," he says, "is an hypothesis. It is not possible to meet all the objections that can be raised against it, any more than one can meet those raised against any fundamental hypothesis of modern science. But an hypothesis is accepted not because it is necessarily undeniably demonstrated, but because it has the capability of explaining known facts, and sufficient evidence to give it preference over alternative explanations."⁷ What evidence then, can be adduced in support of the hypothesis of theism? I believe that the theistic hypothesis can best be substantiated by a restatement of the teleological argument, based on the evidence for design and purpose in the universe.

Strangely enough, the argument can be found in Aquinas, not in the *Summa Theologica*, but in the *Contra Gentiles*, where we read as follows: "In the world, things of different natures accord in one order, not seldom and fortuitously, but always for the most part. Therefore it follows that there is someone by whose providence the world is governed. And this we call God."⁸ Though this sounds surprisingly modern, the reasoning is apparently based on an argument of St. John of Damascus, the eighth-century Greek

⁶ *Philosophical Theology*, II, p. 78.

⁷ *Philosophical Approach*, p. 65.

⁸ Quoted E. L. Mascall, p. 55-6.

theologian. Nevertheless, the words do constitute an excellent summary of the empirical approach to theism. The evidence for the theistic hypothesis is the appearance of design and purpose, not primarily and merely in individual living organisms, but in the course of nature as a whole and in the history of the universe as revealed by science. The argument from the existence of design in individual organisms—the teleology of Paley, associated with the well-known analogy of the watch—is generally assumed nowadays to have been discredited by Darwinism. In actual fact it can still be argued that there is a lot of sound sense in Paley, even though he does sometimes sound rather naïve to modern ears. But whatever be the case with Paley's argument, the evidence for design and purpose in the whole process of nature, contrary to the general impression and despite the furore which *The Origin of the Species* first caused, has been greatly strengthened rather than weakened by the evolutionary hypothesis—as Darwin himself fully realized. There could hardly be a more convincing demonstration of the fact of purpose in nature, for example, than Julian Huxley's essay *The Uniqueness of Man*—a demonstration all the more convincing by reason of the fact that the author himself is not concerned to prove purpose.

Excellent statements of the theological application of the design argument can be found in W. R. Matthews's *The Purpose of God* and in Dr. F. R. Tennant's *Philosophical Theology* in the section entitled "Cosmic Teleology" in Vol. II. Tennant stresses five main points:

- (1) The adaptation of human thought-processes to the objects with which they are concerned.
- (2) The adaptation of the parts to the whole in each living organism.
- (3) The adaptation of the inorganic world to the production, maintenance, and development of living organisms.
- (4) The beauty and sublimity of nature.
- (5) The facts of moral obligation and value.

Taking these points in turn, the first, the adaptation of the universe to thought, is of supreme importance, and it becomes more and more relevant with the progressive development of physics. We tend to take far too much for granted the fact that the universe is a universe of law and order—that it is in effect a universe and not a multiverse, a cosmos, not a chaos. The laws of thought constantly apply to it, and induction and probability, despite their essential illogicality, do furnish practical and invaluable guides to reason and conduct. Present-day physics is becoming more and more a matter of pure mathematics, but the principles still apply to the universe, and the resulting theories do work—even if only to the extent of exploding hydrogen bombs! Einstein evolved Relativity in his mind, but it was Relativity which foretold, with absolute accuracy, the apparent position of stars during an eclipse. As Sir James Jeans

once said: "Nature seems very conversant with the rules of pure mathematics as our mathematicians have formulated them, without drawing to any appreciable extent on their experience of the outer world." He also once likened the principles of mathematics to the rules of a game which man has devised for his own amusement. But when man starts to examine the universe around him, he finds that material objects are playing a precisely similar game, which conforms to the same rules.

Are we not bound to conclude, with Jeans himself, that the universe is an expression of a Mind like our own? This inference, of course, does ignore the Kantian hypothesis, which insists that the external world conforms to our rules of thought for the simple reason that it is essentially a product of our own minds. But in the world of empirical theism, we are obviously dealing with probabilities, and we are clearly at liberty to accept the hypothesis which appears to be the most convincing.

The adaptation of the parts to the whole in each organism—Tennant's second point, is, in effect, Paley's argument, which, as we have already noted, still has validity. Even if the Paleyan type of argument must be rejected, the evolutionary hypothesis does not deprive the adaptiveness found in organisms of its teleological significance. "The discovery of organic evolution," says Tennant, "has caused the teleologist to shift his ground from special design in the products to directivity in the process, and plan in the primary collocations. It has also served to suggest that the organic realm supplies no better basis for the teleological argument of the narrower type than does inorganic nature."⁹

He next considers therefore, the adaptation of inorganic environment to organic life. This point is frequently emphasized nowadays by the supporters of theism. The American biologist, Professor L. J. Henderson, has pointed out that it is the abundance and special properties of the three elements, carbon, hydrogen and oxygen, which make life possible. But these elements were in existence long before life emerged, so that it is perfectly possible to argue that the ultimate purpose of the universe was the emergence of life. It could be objected of course, that this is a case of putting the cart before the horse. The abundance of carbon, hydrogen, and oxygen may have itself given rise to a form of life dependent upon these three elements. But the former hypothesis always remains a possibility, and to the theist, it will seem far more plausible.

Tennant's fourth point, the fact of beauty and sublimity in nature, brings us close to the world of religious experience and mysticism, and ought properly to involve us in a discussion of whether beauty is, or is not, in the eye of the beholder. Experience as such cannot have any real evidential value to the empirical theist, but considered as one chain in a link of evidence, the astounding fact of natural beauty in all its aspects, whether majestic or minute,

is clearly of tremendous significance. It proves, in Tennant's own words, that, "besides possessing a structure that happens to render it habitable by living creatures and intelligible to some of them, the world is a bearer of values, thus evincing affinity with beings such as can appreciate as well as understand."¹⁰

The concept of value also enters into Tennant's fifth and final point, a consideration of the moral status of man. He will not admit that a sound argument for the existence of God can be built on moral considerations alone. But he insists that they do "supply the coping stone of a cumulative teleological argument." For him, the really significant fact is that man is the child of nature. "If man is Nature's child" he writes, "Nature is the wonderful mother of such a child. Any account of her which ignores the fact of her maternity is scientifically partial and philosophically insignificant. . . . Man is no monstrous birth out of due time, no freak or sport. . . . In the fulness of time, Nature found self-utterance in a son possessed of the intelligent and moral status."¹¹ The world-process in short, must be regarded as a *preparatio anthropologica*.

Here we reach the heart of the matter. The evolutionary process itself is the evidence for theism. The process is shot through and through with purpose, and that which emerges at the end must have been in some sense present from the beginning. Despite the protests of agnostic scientists such as Huxley, evolution cannot be explained wholly in terms of automatic mechanism. The common assumption that natural selection explains evolution is incorrect. The important factor in evolution is variation. It is upon this that selection operates—and the causes of variation are still almost wholly unknown. A true theory of the origin of species is still awaited, and whatever the ultimate scientific hypothesis may be, the theist will still see, in the whole process which resulted in man, an expression of the purpose of God. The once popular theories of emergent evolution really make very little difference. They are in effect merely descriptive and not explanatory. As W. R. Matthews says: "In the beginning was Space-Time; in the beginning was Thought; whichever of these two propositions we prefer to believe, no-one could deny that the second was the more intelligible."

The hypothesis of theism, then, far from being irrelevant, stands unchallenged as at least a *possible*, if not a probable explanation of the universe. Dr. A. C. Bouquet sums up the matter as follows: "The teleological argument takes the story of biological evolution and says: 'Here is a tale which seems to have purpose in it; the existence and nature of that purpose is evidence for the nature of the Being who ordains that these things shall so come to pass, that out of the womb of the cosmos shall come, at any rate, humanity with its moral consciousness, its capacity for getting control of its environment, and its insatiable desire for the ideal and the supernatural.'"¹²

In conclusion, we turn to some difficulties associated with theism. Firstly, the psychological objection to theism. Cosmic teleology may be able to establish the existence of mind or purpose, but if, following Aquinas we say "and this we call God," we are making an assumption which lays us open to the more extreme criticisms of psychology. Freud and his disciples argue that the idea of God is essentially an illusion, a figment of the imagination, a futile Father-Image projected onto a cold and impersonal universe. But this objection carries in reality very little weight. We judge whether a man is deluded or not by considering his circumstances and the objective reality with which he is surrounded. The whole tenour of the theistic argument is that a consideration of man's circumstances shows that he is *not* mistaken when he finds a God behind and within the universe. As the report on our *Free Religious Faith* pointed out, projections can be of two kinds. There are projections which correspond to reality, and there are projections which are fanciful.¹³ The scientist's account of the universe is, from one point of view, no less of a projection than the theologian's. Why must we not assume that a knowledge of reality can be built up through projection? It is easy to say that belief in God is only imagination, but does this really prove anything? Bernard Shaw may not have been merely rhetorical when he made St. Joan say that it is through the imagination that the messages of God come to us. As John Keats wrote in one of his letters: "The Imagination may be compared to Adam's dream—he awoke and found it truth."

Secondly, there is the question of the personality of God. Many will say, reviewing the facts we have enumerated: "We agree that there may be purpose in the universe, but how does this imply God, and why assume that God is personal?" This objection also is of little real significance. If we rule out emergent evolution, purpose would seem inevitably to imply mind, and the fact of the adaptation of the universe to thought confirms this conclusion. With regard to personality as such, we only need to look once again at Tennant's conception of the world-process as a *preparatio anthropologica*. Man is clearly personal, and it is inconceivable that a Supreme Being should produce that which is qualitatively greater than itself. Once the existence of a Supreme Being is granted, it is illogical to deny that Being the supreme value of personality. Most of the difficulties in this problem disappear if we cease to assume that to say that God is personal implies that God is a person like ourselves. Baron von Hügel once said that "the obscurity of my life to my pet Pekinese may serve as some indication of the obscurity of the life of Deity to me." This seems perfectly reasonable—yet the obscurity of my life to my dog does not make me less of a person than my dog. On the contrary, it makes me more so.¹⁴

¹³ *A Free Religious Faith*, p. 86.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, Bouquet, *op. cit.*, VII, p. 67.

Finally, the problem of evil. We obviously cannot at this stage make more than passing reference to this notorious philosophical chestnut. We acknowledge the fact that, to many, the supreme objection to theism, or, more precisely, Christian theism, is the existence of evil. While perfectly ready to acknowledge the existence of mind or purpose, they insist that the fact of evil makes nonsense of the claim that the Ruler of the Universe is a God of Love.

The objection is particularly relevant to a theism which is grounded in the acceptance of the evolutionary process as an expression of the purpose of God. The struggle for existence emphasized by evolution, the harrowing picture of nature, red in tooth and claw, the dismal cock-pit with its gladiatorial theory of existence (to quote two phrases used by Thomas Huxley) greatly oppressed the Victorians, and still troubles many sensitive souls. No doubt the amount of pain and suffering involved in evolution has been exaggerated. C. H. Waddington says that the Victorians used the theory of evolution as a battle-ground for their own sadism. But no-one can deny the fact that evolution has involved *some* suffering, that it has produced evil as well as good, and that, in man, it has given birth to sin as well as virtue. As the late Dr. E. W. Barnes said in his Gifford Lectures: Evolution has led to "odious parasitism, to the carnage of the jungle, to the microbic diseases which cause such suffering to humanity, to those animal appetites which are useful in the struggle for survival, and are the basis of sin in man. This, the immoral, brutal, lustful side of creation is as characteristic as the parental self-sacrifice, the adventurous curiosity, the beauty of form and the physical well-being which equally result from the evolutionary process."

The objection is a pertinent one, but it is not insuperable. Dr. Barnes himself of course, did not consider the problem of evil a conclusive objection to theism. "The evolutionary process" he says, "is as clear a revelation of God's creative activity as we can have. Its apparently non-moral character must be with His permission. For some unknown reason, He permitted death, disease, struggle, the instincts which have led to selfishness and lust in man, because he willed that higher moral, intellectual and emotional development which in man is such an unexpected outcome of the process."

Dr. Tennant, in his treatment of the problem of evil, enables us to pass beyond what might be called Dr. Barnes' agnosticism. He argues that God permitted evil, not for some unknown reason, but simply because His ultimate purpose, the creation of finite spirits bearing His image, and enjoying communion with him, could only be achieved through an evolutionary process entailing as its inevitable by-products pain and suffering, catastrophe and sin. There was no other way. Moral goodness, he insists, cannot be created as such, and it is impossible "to imagine a living world in which truly ethical values are realized, save as an evolutionary

cosmos in which free agents live and learn, make choices and build characters."¹⁵

There is a sense in which it is illogical to see in the fact of sin an argument against Christian Theism. Evil is only a problem so long as it is assumed that the ground of the universe is good. The companion problem to the problem of evil is the problem of good—which the opponents of theism conveniently ignore. As Professor Waterhouse says, the opponents of theism "assert that there is no good God, and yet in order to assert that there is not, they must take up the position that there should be such a being, for sin cannot be an objection unless it is assumed that the Good should exist." "Whatever way we look at the matter," he continues, "it must appear that the ground of the universe, and of our own existence, whether we call that ground God or not, has produced alike both the conditions which allow the appearance of evil and those which allow us to condemn and fight against it. If the former appearance of evil is quoted as evidence against the goodness of God, the latter fighting it affords equally good evidence against His moral impotence or neutrality. Why a being morally indifferent, to whom good and bad are alike just phases of the world-process, should create beings who are so profoundly affected where he is neutral, is just as serious a problem as why a good God who hates evil should permit it. We do not escape difficulties, therefore by rejecting theism. We only exchange them."¹⁶

And so to our final conclusion. Despite incidental objections and difficulties, a careful consideration of the evolutionary process culminating in man points unmistakably to a theistic hypothesis—a hypothesis which is not only relevant but essential to the presentation of a rational faith. Whatever may be its superficial attractions, a religion without God is a contradiction in terms, a city without foundations destined for a speedy collapse. It is not theism itself, but spurious forms of theism which have led to the present-day decline in religious belief, and I am convinced that the future lies, not with humanism, but with a faith based on a rational empirical theism. There are those—the traditional theists for example—who hold up their hands in horror at a hypothesis which conceives of the cosmos as in some sense indispensable to God. "If we admit" says E. L. Mascall, "any dependence of God upon the world, the very basis of the arguments by which we have been led to Him is destroyed; a 'first cause' who is not self-sufficient explains nothing at all."¹⁷ But what sort of faith can be built upon a theology which thinks of God primarily as first cause and unmoved prime-mover? How warm and attractive by comparison seems the conclusion to which F. R. Tennant feels himself drawn. "God, man, and the world," he writes, "constitute a chord, and none of its

¹⁵ *Op. cit.*, p.185.

¹⁶ *Op. cit.*, p. 173.

¹⁷ F. L. Mascall, p. 96.

three notes has the ring of truth without the accompaniment of the other two. To say the same in terms of another metaphor: the cosmos is no logico-geometrical scheme, but an adventure of divine love."¹⁸ In W. R. Matthews also, we find a similar rejection of the doctrine of the self-sufficiency of God. "Our hearts are restless until they find rest in God," he says, "but is there no corresponding truth about the divine experience? 'We love him because He first loved us'—His heart is restless until we find rest in Him."¹⁹

Others will perhaps complain of the lack of certainty afforded by cosmic teleology. But as we have already noted, the realm of certainty in this life is extremely limited. Neither the existence of the external world, nor that of other selves can be proved for certain. If, as Tennant argues, growth towards perfection whether of character or of faith, rather than the attainment of perfectness, be the divine purpose for our earthly life, then we cannot expect certainty. Over-abundance of light would preclude that groping after God which is "the obverse of revelation to a developing and free agent such as man."²⁰ In any case, once theism is established as a reasonable hypothesis, then we *are* entitled to consider as in part evidential, the facts of religious and mystical experience, and to seek through this channel, something approaching certainty.

But perhaps when all is said and done, it will always be the case that theism inevitably demands, in the end, what has been called a leap of faith. Theism is a hypothesis, and the final test of any hypothesis must be a pragmatic one—does it work? What are the consequences when it is applied to reality. It is not otherwise with theism. Its final verification must be experimental. The truth of the matter is very neatly put by the genial old centenarian in the Spanish play by the Quintero brothers—*A Hundred Years Old*—"Live your life as if there were a God in heaven. . . . We can't be sure there is, you know. Nor you, nor I, nor anyone can be quite sure. But live as if there were." May it not be that it is only when we are prepared to make the leap of faith and to trust ourselves utterly to the Everlasting Arms, that we see the ultimate truth of theism? Perhaps the last word should be with Browning:

" So long as there is just enough
To pin my faith to, tho' it hap
Only at points, from gap to gap
One hangs up a huge curtain so
Grandly, nor seeks to have it go
Foldless and flat along the wall.
What care I if some interval
Of life less plainly may depend
On God? I'd hang there to the end."

18 *Op. cit.*, p. 259.

19 *Op. cit.*, p. 174.

20 *Op. cit.*, p. 208.

Theocentric Affirmations

GOD is the Oneness of a Universe of immense diversity; the One Ground of both soul and world; the principle of Unity that holds the Universe and the mind of man in wholeness, integration, peace.

He is thus the irrefragable Wholeness of a world of divided and often warring units, social and physical.

He is the creative union of all opposition, contradictions, polarities; the principle of transcendence; the implicit solution of all conflicts; He is the Integral Being known to us in poetical and mystical moments.

GOD is the Truth that underlies and finally overcomes all the deceptions of appearance, all darkness whether of knowledge or of ignorance, of error or sin.

He is the Beauty in whose presence and light we are most vividly and joyfully alive and aware: Beauty of Nature, of Vision, of Spirit, of Union.

He is the Goodness invincible, yet uncoercive, amidst and above manifold evil.

GOD is pure Spirit, prior and subsequent to all objectification, incarnation, specialization, mechanization in Nature, Personality, Doctrine, Institution, Society, State, Habit and Instrumentality in Form of every kind.

He is the Infinite Subjectivity, complementary to and continuous with our finite being.

GOD is the Will that underlies instinct, desire, thought, imagination, and "own will"; the Will that is deeper and lovelier than our will; the Self deep within and beyond our selves.

GOD is the Love "that moves the Sun and the other stars" and slowly raises the human soul, vision and will into union with Himself. He is Pure Love, by contrast with all the subtly egoistic adulterations thereof on the natural human level. He is the Beloved of the mystical seeker pressing towards the spiritual heights.

GOD is the Eternal: is Himself Eternity. He is the qualitative Infinity and Depth in which all that is temporal is rooted. He is the Eternal Present within which Time and History are parentheses.

GOD is our Beginning and our End,
the Object of our life-quest,
the inspiration of that quest itself,
the road we must travel,
the inward stair we must ascend,
the spiritual strife we engage in and endure,
the victories and defeats, joys and sorrows,
the vision, the darkness, the despair,
—of all these He is the inwardness as we are the outwardness.

GOD is ours to choose or reject freely.

He is the Centre of all gyrations and deviations, of our rejections as of our acceptances.

All growth and movement are finally towards or away from Him; towards Life or towards decline and death.

GOD is the Divine Abyss and Mystery which for ever transcends all human concepts and systems. His Being outreaches all symbols, relativities, utilities.

Yet He sustains the profound human-Divine identity and difference. He remains the Source and Origin of endless Light and Love, revealed to adoration, though hidden from thought.

The late R. M. ENTWISTLE.

NOTE. *Who will submit Homocentric Affirmations—original or compiled—to balance these?. Ed.*

The Relevance of Jesus

JOYCE HAZLEHURST*

UNITARIANS are somewhat belatedly discovering that human beings possess imagination as well as reason, and that religious teaching must appeal to this imagination, if it is to inspire and guide the lives of men. An exclusively rationalist attitude is passing from among us, I believe, and I am glad. In my own life I am moved to action chiefly by my imagination. I find Jesus relevant because he is the focus for my imagination.

Phillip Hewett in *An Unfettered Faith* writes about Jesus as follows: "The Leadership of Jesus" was one of Clarke's 'Five Points,' and Unitarians have in the past laid considerable stress upon discipleship to Jesus. The more recent tendency is for Unitarians to claim that their primary allegiance is to principles, rather than to any person or persons. The working-principles of freedom, reason and tolerance, have already been discussed. The principles of truth and sincerity are accepted as the guides of all thinking, and the principles of justice, love, peace and brotherhood as the guides to all action. Irrespective of who preached the value of these virtues, they are worthy of our allegiance for their own sake. There can be no doubt that, although devotion to a person has been central in many religions, devotion to principles offers a very real, though perhaps more difficult alternative." (p. 26).

Is Hewett right? Are Unitarians moving from devotion-to-a-person to devotion-to-principles, and if so, is that a wise move to make?

At any time in any community the number of people who think in concepts, abstract terms, is relatively small. I think it always will be. However far our educational system spreads, it is unlikely

* The Paper was given at the Annual Conference of Ministers at Great Hucklow, September, 1956. Personal note on page 89.

to produce great numbers of truly intellectual people. That is one reason why sermon illustrations are important. Most people in a congregation cannot follow a line of thought for long without them. In an illustration from human life, the preacher moves for a moment into the familiar scenery of his congregation's minds. What is more, the whole art of preaching is to embody the sermon into the aspect, the voice, the demeanour of the preacher; in true preaching, the sermon and the preacher are fused in one, and that is the difference between live preaching and a radio sermon or the printed page. Preaching is delivering a message through personality. Principles alone may and do arouse the devotion of those who think habitually in concepts. But my contention is that for the common run of men, principles, disembodied from personality, do not move the will to action. The word must take flesh and dwell among us, otherwise we do not see the glory.

But to return to Hewett. Further on in the same chapter, he describes the kind of Christian discipleship of which he, as a Unitarian, approves: "Discipleship to Jesus is . . . *a serving with him of the principles which he served*, and an acknowledgment of the outstanding way in which he served them. So envisaged, it is no way incompatible with discipleship to other spiritual leaders who have also served the same principles. If devotion to any person can help us to serve more faithfully the principles they cherished, such devotion is certainly to be encouraged. But one must always guard against development into idolatry." (p. 127).

With that description I largely agree, except that I think of Jesus as serving his God rather than principles. But apart from that, I do not think Hewett gives sufficient consideration to the remarkable fact that *the personality of Jesus apparently persuades some people to serve principles along with him*. That is the important part. Principles are all very fine, but many of us will not consciously serve them, until our imagination is fired. Jesus is relevant to-day in so far as he still fires our imagination.

Now for a brief space I shall draw on my personal religious history. I do so without apology for two reasons. First, I believe our personal religious history has much to do with our thinking about Jesus and theology generally. Secondly, others may find similarities or contrasts in their own history helpful to discover.

I was reared in an Evangelical Church of England which had gone dead. The central doctrine was the Atonement, but there was no experience of conversion to make the idea of salvation meaningful and alive. I grew up fundamentalist and dogmatic. At the age of twenty I attended a Student Christian Movement Conference at Swanwick and heard the Quaker, H. G. Wood, lecture on 'The Place of Jesus in History.' At the end he said, "I am going to talk for five minutes about the cross." It was the first time I had thought about the cross without the Atonement attached. I was deeply moved. I said to myself, "I have left Jesus hanging on the cross

and never done anything about it." That night, through mystical experience, I started life and religion over again. I lost my fundamentalism and dogmatism, and returned to my home with a new freedom in theology and a new dynamic love of God and man through Jesus.

One of the many things the Rev. R. V. Holt taught me was to try to analyse a religious thinker's deepest experience and from that analysis understand the reason for his particular theology. Mr. Holt used to say, "Well, you see, he was really a God-mystic, or he was really a nature-mystic. His Christianity was only secondary." I hesitate to use the word 'mystic' of myself, and do so only as a convenient label. If I had to describe myself, I should do so as a Jesus-mystic, not a Christ-mystic, but emphatically a Jesus-mystic. That means that my idea of God and man is derived from Jesus and that I look for the Jesus pattern everywhere as my ideal. I look for Jesus alike in modern saints such as Schweitzer and in figures from the other world religions. If I go exploring into other faiths, I carry the Jesus pattern with me and respond only to characteristics which harmonise with that. For example, what appeals to me most out of the life of the Buddha? The fact that he did what Jesus's Rich Young Ruler failed to do, namely he rejected great possessions to follow truth and serve humanity. I am attracted also to the story of his helping the distracted mother-sheep down the hill, reminding me of Jesus, the Good Shepherd. All this means that, in the words of a young American Unitarian I have met recently, I am a bad case of 'Jesus fixation.' Perhaps I am. But I owe a great deal to it. This 'Jesus fixation' has, at least, sent me out from a sheltered life into the East End of London and other odd places!

I am a Jesus-mystic. But I am sufficiently Unitarian not to think him either God or Perfect Man or the Greatest Man who ever lived, or any of these titles. I cannot make such comparisons. They are unreal to me. All I know is that Jesus as a man is the driving-force of my life. He is relevant to me. I am also sufficiently Unitarian to wonder whether my self-analysis has gone deep enough in calling myself a Jesus-mystic. Am I really a love-mystic? Did the principle of love pass across my vision all those years ago, embodied in the person of Jesus on the cross? Hewett, in the same chapter I have quoted, writes, "The general spirit pervading the personality and the teachings of Jesus is undoubtedly that of love, the original 'Christian charity.' Beyond this reflected spirit, there is little that is known for certain about him." (p. 124). If Jesus reflects love, I do not care how little we know about him. It is his embodiment of love that matters to me. So perhaps I am a love-mystic after all, rather than a Jesus-mystic, and that would explain how I am able to detach myself from Jesus when the need arises, as I shall show later. Whether a love-mystic or not, I cannot deny that it was the personality of Jesus that first attracted me and still holds me. As a Unitarian, trying to follow truth wherever it leads

me, I am prepared even to replace Jesus in my imagination with another figure, if I can find a better. But I have to confess that so far I have not found one.

Up to this point, then, I have explained how Jesus is relevant to me. Whom do I mean by 'Jesus'? What content does that name hold for me? How do I, as a Unitarian today, cope with the Jesus of History and the Christ of orthodox tradition? I discard a formidable amount.

Let me deal briefly with the Historical Jesus. As someone who is far from being a New Testament scholar, I am fortunate in being called upon to write this paper soon after Principal L. A. Garrard's Essex Hall lecture on *The Historical Jesus*. I am only too happy to quote his conclusion: "Some who have followed this lecture may feel that the results of the Quest of the Historical Jesus, as I have presented it, are disappointingly meagre at any rate as regards the Master's life and personality. They will still be left with the impact he made upon those who had known him, an impact so great that they felt that it was not possible that death should hold him, and they had to go on in his spirit to turn the world upside down. They will still have the great bulk of the teaching. . . . They will still have the parable of the Prodigal Son to help them in their view of God, and that of the Good Samaritan to give them the pattern of action that God's love should prompt in us." (p. 28).

All that is quite enough for me. I need hardly add that the Jesus with whom I feel my mind to be in contact is a real man who once lived in history, not a creation of the church.

Now I reach my formidable list of elements in the Jesus story which I discard either as untrue or as irrelevant to a modern religious outlook. First, I discard the Christology which makes Jesus God Incarnate, one of a mysterious Trinity and part of a scheme of salvation through his death. I have come to understand how much of orthodox doctrine arose and even to see the symbolic and imaginative value of some of this teaching, but it is not for me. When Jesus becomes part of a theological equation and ceases to be a man, he loses for me his impact upon my imagination.

What else do I discard? Jesus's Messiahship. I have learnt something about it and I know it meant much to Jesus himself. Nevertheless, I agree wholeheartedly with F. R. Barry in *The Relevance of Christianity* when he writes, "The whole Messianic category is of His (Jesus's) world and not ours, a world frankly as dead as the moon." (p. 101). Some theologians take a delight in making Jesus as remote a figure for the twentieth century as possible. They give the impression that the era of Jesus is the only one that really matters; if the twentieth century cannot understand those early times, so much the worse for the twentieth century. It is, however, in the twentieth century that we and our congregations are living.

So I discard Christology, Atonement, Messiahship. What else? At this point I take over wholesale a list of rejections from somebody

else, namely, Dr. Estlin Carpenter, in his Essex Hall lecture of 1895 entitled *The Relation of Jesus to His Age and Our Own*. Carpenter rejected the following elements in the Jesus story:

Jesus's dualism, seeing a conflict between God and the Devil; his eschatology, including its effect upon his ethical teaching; his belief in Hell; his view of nature; his belief in the resurrection of the dead; nature miracles; his misreading of nervous disease as possession by demons; and, finally, the existence of angels. (p. 60).

What a list! And I add four more rejections of my own.

First, the Early Christian emphasis on the resurrection. I think of the resurrection spiritually, not physically, and I realize its importance for the Early Church, but even so I regard it as an anticlimax to the tragedy of the crucifixion, a *deus ex machina*, an inartistic end. In real life to-day we are left sometimes looking up at a cross with no resurrection to follow, and we have to pick ourselves up and start again from there—from the cross, not the empty tomb.

Secondly, while keeping much of Jesus' idea of God, I am not happy with his Father-metaphor. A psychiatrist told me once that so deeply embedded in the Western mind was the Fatherhood of God that it was almost impossible for a man who had had a bad father to believe in God. I use Theodore Parker's idea of God's Motherhood sometimes. But I find myself tending more and more to the conception of God as Spirit within us. The idea of personal relationship implied in God's Fatherhood appeals to me; but the idea of 'Father above,' as the hymn expresses it, seems to stress God's transcendence at the expense of his immanence.

Thirdly, while keeping Jesus's emphasis on prayer, I reject the petitionary prayer which he seems to have encouraged.

Fourthly and lastly, I reject any suggestion of intolerance or exclusiveness in Jesus or Early Christianity, "preaching the gospel to every creature" or "None cometh to the Father but by me." I think the fact that Christianity has become more tolerant is an improvement on the inevitable fervour of a new religion.

I have finished my rejections and may well expect two questions. First: *What have you got left?* Secondly: *Have you any right to mutilate a historical figure in this way?*

What have you got left? I am left with precisely the humanitarian figure who went about doing good and teaching love of God and man, whom Harnack made vivid in *What is Christianity?* and who is supposed to have been exploded by eschatology and other modern theories. I am left with him because I cannot get away from him. Character and human relationships are my great preoccupations; in any spiritual teacher those are what I look for, for they and only they are my vehicles of the divine. You can add what you like, and take away what you like: it is the impact of personality, the quality of life which count with me. If that makes me an incurable Liberal, then an incurable Liberal I am.

Secondly, *Have you any right to mutilate a historical figure in this way?*

Yes, I have, because—and in this I differ from earlier Liberals, I believe—I am completely frank about what I am doing. I do not pretend that only 'my' Jesus is the authentic Jesus and that all the parts I do not like are spurious. I say quite openly, "Jesus lived twenty centuries ago. If I am true to myself and my own age, I cannot expect that his whole story will appeal to me. But I have every right to select the parts which are meaningful to me."

Let me dwell on the right of selection, because it is important. I am weary of the 'all or nothing' argument: "Either you must accept the whole Bible as true or reject all of it." Why? Surely it is one of the privileges of human freedom to have the power of choice? I have another thought also. Even with our contemporaries, it is never the whole personality that appeals to us, but only certain aspects. I went to school under a great headmistress. I knew only one side of her. I have no idea of what she was like with her family or her colleagues on the teaching-staff. Even about the one side of her I did know—her headship of my school—I have certain criticisms to make. But I do not dwell on these things. What I dwell on are the high ideals and the sense of duty which she impressed on me in my youth and which have influenced me all my life. If we select what appeals to us from the personalities of our contemporaries, may we not do so when centuries divide?

Up to this point, I have tried to show how and why Jesus is relevant to *me*. But I am not everybody. Let me now draw upon my experience as a minister to show in what ways Jesus seems to be relevant to our own age.

First, I have already touched upon the impact of Jesus's personality upon people to-day, especially the vast majority whose habitual thinking is not conceptual. I have said, "Jesus is relevant in so far as he still fires our imagination."

A Unitarian friend of mine, who came over from the Anglican Church twenty-five years ago, has recently been reading Renan's *Life of Jesus*. She was a Universalist Unitarian, somewhat prejudiced against Christianity, until this book fascinated her. "I can see Jesus as a real man at last," she has confessed. "I am greatly attracted to his personality, and it is making a difference to my religious life. I wonder whether my prejudice against him all these years has been a reaction against the orthodox picture of Christ I was taught in the Church of England?"

Now I am willing to admit that many Universalists among us are genuine Universalists. But I have a suspicion that some who call themselves Universalists and also admit to prejudice against Jesus, are suffering from 'reaction thinking' and are revolting, perhaps unconsciously, against the idolatry of Jesus they disliked in orthodoxy. If that is so, I am sorry if they cut themselves off from what might be an enriching experience.

It might be objected, "This friend of yours has not really come into contact with Jesus through reading Renan, but only with Renan." A Life of Jesus reflects the personality of the writer, it is true, whether that writer be Renan, St. John or Middleton Murry. But it also reflects the personality of Jesus in so far as Jesus has fired the writer's imagination. Purists complain that individuals and also time-conditioned schools of thought return to Jesus and fulfil themselves and their longings in him. As a Unitarian with some theological training, I try to correct the more blatant distortions of the life of Jesus when I meet them, but at the same time I admit that some distortion is inevitable. The remarkable fact about Jesus is his attraction for all kinds of men and women and for all ages. When one is attracted to a historical personality, one inevitably makes him one's own: that is part of the process of attraction.

Secondly, I find Jesus relevant to the modern situation because in himself and in his thought, he wrestled with what E. G. Lee calls the 'triangular relationship,' namely God, man and society, and I agree that awareness of all three is vitally necessary. I quote from *Christianity in Chains*: "A true discipline of the self . . . may lie in the exploration of contrast between social and private moralities. In this contrast may be discovered the necessity of having another point of reference beyond the self and society for complete moral action, namely the existence of God. So the Christian religion would affirm: and within this triangular relationship, values would be discovered that are not disclosed in the dual individual-society arrangement. It is these values, more prehensile, more spiritual and profound than any found in secularism, that Christianity preserves, not—when it is dynamic—in a hierarchy of values, but by simply insisting upon the worship of God." (p. 95).

'The dual individual-society arrangement' is proving sterile in our age. It needs the third factor, consciousness of God. It is here that Jesus's awareness of God within man and within society can help us most.

Thirdly, Jesus in his teaching and experience of forgiveness gives the most satisfying answer to the problem of sin that I have ever found. Our age is much concerned with sin, not, as our forefathers were, as part of a theological equation or as something that would land us in hell-fire, but as the insidious canker that ruins our fair world, our Welfare State or whatever else our hopes and dreams would build. The Atonement never satisfied me as an answer to sin, for, after all, folk still go on sinning. So they do after forgiveness. Nevertheless, forgiveness, whether divine or human, is a creative experience, opening up within the soul new vistas of love and understanding and tender relationships. Justice and punishment leave the human spirit in bondage to its sin; forgiveness opens the prison door and beckons the soul outwards to new freedom and new responsiveness.

Fourthly, the social meaning of Christian peace and brotherhood is very clear to to-day's man-in-the-street. It is useless arguing with him, as some theologians try to do, that Jesus was not a pacifist or a Socialist and that his Kingdom of God did not mean the Welfare State or a world free from war. Too many reformers have sallied forth to right the wrong under the banner of the cross. Moreover, the simple reader of the Gospels feels instinctively Jesus' sympathy with the poor and the hungry, and naturally applies that sympathy to the crying needs of his own day.

Fifthly, I think Jesus is relevant because he suffered a cruel death. This is an age conscious of the resurgence of cruelty in Western civilization and extraordinarily sensitive to suffering of all kinds. A religious leader who himself suffered does not explain suffering but at least helps to share it; and this in itself is comfort.

Sixthly, I believe Jesus is relevant to this and indeed any age because of his freedom of spirit and vitality. His is the new wine constantly being poured into new bottles.

These, then, are my six reasons for the relevance of Jesus: the impact of his personality upon the imagination; his consciousness of God as the link between man and society; forgiveness as a creative way of dealing with sin; the readiness with which his gospel adapts itself to social reform; the comfort of the cross; his own 'unfettered faith.'

Now, lastly, let me describe three major difficulties in the way of that relevance being felt, and what I, as a minister, do about them.

The first is staleness in the Christian tradition. The Jesus story has become stale for very many people either through the deadening effect of Christology or through repetition of familiar stories. As I have already shown, the gospel material on which I as a Unitarian feel able to draw, is precious little. I cannot for ever be reading the Good Samaritan or the Prodigal Son. Sometimes we feel that our lay people in Sunday Schools use a very limited range of Biblical readings. My sympathy is with them. The range of readings suitable for to-day is limited. How do I deal with this staleness? As I have already said, I apparently detach myself from Jesus when the need arises. Carrying always with me, however, the Jesus pattern in my mind, I find illustrations that harmonize with that pattern from modern lives or ancient saints or other religions. If Jesus becomes an obstacle either through staleness or prejudice or the desire for one religion in one world, then I do not explicitly use his example. The last thing Jesus would have wanted to be is an obstacle on the road to God. It is a shame if our stupidity as religious teachers allows the fresh and youthful spirit of Jesus to become stale.

The second difficulty is the scepticism of our age. I quote E. G. Lee again: "A foundation cause of present civilization is our capacity for doubt. Men doubted in the past but hardly in the basic way of to-day. Modern man doubts the very essence of his own being. Nothing is taken for granted, literally nothing, everything

is opened up for exploration and doubt." (p. 123). Again: "No hard and fast explanation, emphasizing its own certainty, and allowing no other certainty outside its own can satisfy his deep need to inquire. In a real religion, one that can explain and vivify the world around him, make it a place where he can breathe and be at home, there must be a reverent agnosticism." (p. 129).

I agree. One of the ways in which Unitarian churches help the present age is by allowing room for reverent agnosticism. There is no creed to recite, there are no questions asked. People can begin where they want to begin, even if that is merely painting the church railings or mending the handle on the vestry door. I quarrel with agnosticism only when it leads, as it sometimes does, to paralysis of action. A man in trouble came to Jesus and said, "Lord, I believe. Help thou my unbelief." It is the eternal cry. "I don't know what I believe. I'm all mixed up." How can Unitarian ministers help people's unbelief? Chiefly by showing a Christian community at work and drawing others into a life of service. Jesus was many-sided. He took people as they were, found out what was in them available to use, and used it in the way most helpful to them. Sometimes he said, "Well, come and help *me* for a start. Give me a drink of water, invite me to supper." That small act of service set them on the road of love, the road that circles between man and God. The challenge of humanism no longer troubles me. Once people's feet are set on the road of love, at whatever point they start, they come full circle in time . . . or perhaps in eternity. That, at least, is my faith.

The third and last difficulty is the idealism of Jesus, which often seems too lofty for this wicked world, especially as we now try to apply his idealism to all spheres of life. Modern Islam criticizes Christianity for this and advertises itself as a more realistic religion within man's grasp, instead of always out of reach. It is the terrible gap between Christian ideal and social fact that makes many thoughtful people despair. I meet this difficulty thus. I stress that the best Christians of to-day are better than the Early Christians because they apply their standards more widely. I point out that we are taking Christian idealism into entirely new fields and must expect the rugged conditions of all pioneers. I plead for Christian statesmanship, i.e. the wisdom that knows what can be done now and what must wait. Finally, I ask, "Would not an easy religion be very boring?"

I have come to the end of my paper. But there is one tremendous question I have left out: is Jesus relevant for the whole world, not merely Western civilization? There are some who say that the religion of the future must be pacifist. I would agree. There are others who say the religion of the future must be Universalist. I pause over my answer.

One of the most vivid memories I have of my year in New York City is singing the song 'One World' at International House in a crowd of students representing nearly all the countries of the world.

'One World.' Should it not be also 'One God,' 'One Religion'? I once heard the Rev. G. Randall Jones try to resolve our Christocentric versus Universalist argument thus: "Unitarianism is the kind of Christianity which reaches out to meet other faiths in fellowship." That is as far as I can go. I gladly recognize that Jesus is not the only way to God, and, as I have already said, I do not believe Jesus would have wished to become an obstacle. I think that greater harmony between the various religions through their all becoming more tolerant and more knowledgeable about each other, is the most we can expect. If we deliberately discard our own traditions in the interests of Universalism, my fear is that we shall end with no religion at all, because we shall have discarded the symbols that evoke our imaginative response.

I am indebted to G. Randall Jones for his great phrase, 'The Religion behind the Religions.' I believe that realm exists, and sometimes I dimly glimpse it, but I am not living in it. I am living inside Christianity, a liberal and progressive version, but still Christianity. Jesus is my way to God, but it is *his* God that I reach. Perhaps the men and women of the future will be living within The Religion behind the Religions. I do not know. In the meantime I have to be true to my own limited insight:

"Thou must be true thyself,
If thou the true wouldst teach."

How personal I am! Is it because I am a woman? I try to discuss Jesus's relevance to the whole world, and before I know where I am, I am back to describing his influence on me! And yet I have a feeling that that is the heart of religion: God and the self. However hard we think about the world and religion in general, we come back to where we started, ourselves in particular. We are ourselves involved. I am thankful that Existentialism has recognized that inescapable fact. I quote from E. L. Allen's *Existentialism from Within*: 'Existentialism is an attempt at philosophizing from the standpoint of the actor instead of, as has been customary, from that of the spectator,' (p. 3). In religion we are inevitably actors, not spectators. All we can do is to follow our own insights as sincerely as we can.

Portrait of Jesus

You, Jesus, to me are and are not. In this you are like Life itself. Imagination affirms, experience confirms, reason qualifies your existence. To accept you as God is irrational, absurd: not to know you as divine is to misunderstand both nature and history.

How divine? Is your divinity that of Blake's "human form divine," the perfect man, or something even more deeply and radiantly real than these?

Of the "natural" divinity of Blake's vision all men are deemed sharers; but you are seen apart. As to perfection, is this possible to

one who is human? Yet you are the Example revered by half the world, woven into its history and emulated by its choicest sons. Are you, then, more than human after all?

My being vibrates to what is said of you—that you knew what was in man; that power went out from you: and to what you said—“I and my Father are one.” Most assuredly, I believe you came that men might have life, and have it more abundantly.

You “came.” Ordinarily men are said to be born. Prophets and liberators come. Yet have they to be born. So had you. Wherefore in their zeal your worshippers have made a myth of your birth. You were begotten, not born, and your mother was a virgin. Myths are true, but not on the animal plane.

Man is a creature of many worlds. Over, within and working through all of them is God. Within the highest, as man has entrance there, he sees God as Christ, as cosmic personality, as “anointed humanity.” This is your exaltation, that men behold Christ in you, even as you were conscious that the Father was in you and you in Him.

In their capacity for seeing you as Christ all may become aware of their godlikeness, even if it be but remotely from the centre. But to be godlike, though it reach the peak of human perfection, is not to be God; and to be God is impossible for one either born or begotten.

Is it irreverent or demeaning to call you the Chariot of Christ, the Messenger of God? To me, no doubt, and to that half-the-world which reveres you, The Chariot and The Messenger. But there are other Chariots and other Messengers; and the Charioteer, though one, bears not the same name when driving these others: just as the Messengers bear no common name, though bringing a common (divine) message.

To sit and hear you, not at the Last Supper, but a Present One, nor in the company of those you claimed from the sea, but of Socrates and his Plato, Zoroaster, Confucius, the Buddha, Mahomet, and perhaps (who knows?) some One as yet neither begotten nor born—would this be to have your Stature lessened, your Passion cooled or your Sacrament undone? Silence alone may answer.

And the Last Supper itself! There indeed you were Christ. There you inspired and commanded men. The “living soul,” having obeyed you, made preparation to become the “life-giving spirit.”

And the morrow, what of the morrow? You were Jesus of the Cross. To say that you were God is a great foolishness. To say that you absolved me from the responsibility of living cannot be true. Yet Christ was above, if not on, your Cross, and He shed from there a great Light for the World to see. I know not if there has ever been a greater, or will be, but the human story is long, dimly begun and at times suffering eclipse. And one half the world turns not the same pages as the other half. Mine, therefore, the prayer, that the light that is in me be not darkness; so that, in following you, I may rightly see that, Son of God and Son of Man as you are, there may be others.

W. E. WALKER.

The Science of Christian Living

SIR HARRY LINDSAY*

THE day-to-day life of the human being is usually regarded as an art rather than a science, but this is surely a one-sided view to take. Human life is largely a life of the mind, and the mind, as we shall see in more detail presently, reasons as well as feels. If, therefore, we are interested in the way to live, the how and why of living, we must be prepared not merely to feel our way through life but also to think life out. For there are facts of life which are definite and certain; and certainty means the existence of law; and law implies the existence of fallacies which must be cleared up if law is to be recognized and obeyed; and if fallacies are to be exposed this can only be done in the light of basic principles which are generally accepted as true.

After all, certainty is what we long for, and it is only on the basis of certainty that life can be enjoyed; and enjoyment is the Art of Living. It seems only reasonable, then, that we should try to master the Science of Living before we can advance to the Art, the enjoyment, of Living. For Life is both game and contest. To enjoy a game with the whole heart it is necessary to study the rules of the contest with a single mind.

So let us agree a course for our pursuit of the Science of Christian Living. Let us begin with our basic Christian principles which cannot be proved but which are probable. Let us advance to the known facts, the mental mechanism of the human personality which is subject to these basic principles. Let us proceed to expose any popular fallacies which appear to undermine the value of the principles in their relevance to the known facts. Let us then see if we have sufficient material on which to frame the laws which support the Science of Living. And finally let us try to estimate in what respects these same laws will make the Technique of Living, i.e. the day-to-day life of the average human being, less haphazard, more clear and certain.

* * *

Firstly, then, the basic truths which are probable but not provable; they are essential to the argument and require statement; they are our home base, and if they fail to convince, our joint enterprise fails, but if they are accepted, they open up the subject sufficiently to give initial direction to our journey. The premisses are: (a) That God exists; (b) That He is Creator and Sustainer, and therefore responsible for all His works (made them not just for fun but responsibility, with a purpose inspiring each); (c) That He

* Personal note on page 89.

created man in His own image,¹ which is Personality; (d) That the God-man relationship is therefore personal, i.e. that (as revealed by Jesus Christ) man matters personally to God and that God matters personally to man. And to these four premisses we may add a fifth revealed by modern scientists, (e), That the responsible purposes inspiring Creation are evolutionary in method; they are fulfilled gradually and consecutively from the simple to the complex, from the less to the more mature, thence to the still more mature and so on.

* * *

If these five premisses are accepted, we are now free to set forth on our enquiry; and let us begin by trying to state the known facts, to answer in the light of modern knowledge the question "What is Man?" We have already agreed that man's life is largely a life of the mind, so we have first to get clear the mechanism of the human mind.

We can confidently assert a central ego, psyche or soul, call it which you will. The ego is active in three different spheres, those of feeling, thinking and willing; i.e. it is equipped with emotion or driving power, with reason or directive power and with will or executive power. That is the central mechanism by which the ego functions.

In addition the ego possesses attributes or qualities—"talents," Jesus Christ called them—which are partly inherited, partly acquired by contact with other personalities in the course of daily life. These attributes are many and varied; it is they which impress upon the ego its unique stamp or character, and if the attributes are really outstanding they are said to give "individuality" to their gifted possessor, the ten-talent man or woman of Our Lord's parable.

And finally the ego, the core of the human personality, relying on emotion and reason and by virtue of its will, is enabled to make choices, to exercise preferences, in its contacts with other personalities. It takes up attitudes towards them, attitudes of liking or disliking, love, indifference or hatred, attitudes which have a powerful effect upon the growth of its own character. For it tends to assimilate the qualities it loves from the personalities it loves, whereas indifference leaves it unaffected and hatred blinds it to qualities in other people by which it might have benefited. Clearly these attitudes are of vital importance to the ego, for in helping to shape its character they shape also (as we shall see later) its spiritual destiny.

* * *

Having established this mechanism of the human mind we now turn to consider how it is that imperfections arise in its working. If, as we postulated, man has received from God the divine gift of personality, it is clear that human personality is like God's in kind but not in degree; in other words that, whereas God is perfect, man is imperfect, and that God's perfection centres in the fact that God is Spirit. It is not God who is anthropomorphic but man who is theomorphic, and the "morphe" or "image" of God is the

¹ For an attempt to explain this term see "Creation from a New Angle," *Hibbert Journal*, July, 1954.

perfection of spiritual personality, the perfect personality being one in which all functions, attributes and external relationships are perfectly integrated. The imperfections of man's personality must therefore be due to faults and fallacies in human feeling and thinking. What are these fallacies?

In the first place many persons, men and women alike, make the mistake of supposing that the mind is the ego and the ego, is the mind. But the mind is, or should be, the servant or agent of the ego, carrying out the ego's instructions. It is when the ego, through ignorance or indolence or indifference, abandons its due control that the mind is apt to pursue lines of thought of which the ego would not approve if it were alert and in full control. How often one hears it said: "That is how I was made, I cannot help myself." But usually one *can* help oneself, and the mechanism of self-help is there ready-made, in the practice and perfection of mind-control.

And a second fallacy is allied to the first, namely that the human ego can best resolve its own tensions, both internal and external, by trusting wholly to emotion in preference to reason or wholly to reason in preference to emotion. Most of life's experiences reach the ego through one or other door of the mind, through the door of thinking or through that of feeling, by the head or by the heart; and such experiences may and often do need correction. But correction involves a deliberate exercise of the will; the exercise calls for effort, and the effort is all too often avoided or postponed. Many of the tensions which distress man arise from the conflict between emotion and reason, between the desire for beauty and the desire for power; and the God-conscious man is best armed to control and adjust the two desires.

It is the attributes or qualities of the ego which give rise to our third fallacy; for they are divine talents given in order that they may be profitably employed, loaned to other men and women for their use and enjoyment, not merely spent on self. In short, that self which man has inherited from his animal-ancestors (in whom, after all, self-preservation was the paramount law of being) tends to become even more paramount as instinct fades and self-consciousness takes its place. Again it is the God-conscious man or woman who is best qualified to give to the ego its proper value as the centre of the human personality but not its objective, for man's destiny is spiritual, with God.

It seems, therefore, from our review of these fallacies, that of all God's creatures man is the least mature. The heavens declare the glory of God because the heavenly bodies have attained the perfection of form and function designed for them, and it is the same with plants and animals. But man is still immature, still groping after God. In the heathen stage he is a child; the divine revelations by sage and prophet brought him through adolescence; only in the consciousness of God as revealed by Jesus Christ can man attain to full maturity.

Having agreed our basic principles and examined the known facts to which they apply, and having exposed some of the fallacies which hinder the application of the principles to the facts, we may now turn to study the laws which support and enforce the Science of Living. And, since man is a created being, it will perhaps be safest to draw our laws from those manifest in the divine Plan of Creation. For a pattern thus runs through the whole of Creation. There is, first, an inert environment into which is introduced an active unit—the electrically charged atom of matter into inert space (the universe); the living cell into an inorganic world (this earth); and the primate charged with personality into the impersonal world of Nature. Next, the units multiply, taking form and substance and revealing, as heavenly bodies, as *genera* and species and again as tribes and races of men, the greatest diversity of which the prototype was capable in terms of its environment. It is the tensions facing all living creatures, both under pressure of their own natures and in reaction to each other and to their environments, which induce efforts on the creature's part to minimize or escape the tensions; and it is on these efforts that the Creator relies for all evolutionary advance from immaturity to maturity in the individual life and again from lower to higher grades in the hierarchy of *genera* and species.

Our first law, then, is a *Law of Tensions*. Tensions are essential to human evolution no less than to that of plant and animal. In the effort to reduce physical tensions man adapts his material environment, the resources of earth, sea and air, to his bodily needs, and indeed civilized man calls on the whole earth for his requirements of food, drink and raw materials. In his inner life of the mind the tension between emotion and reason is often, as we have seen, too much for him, and he tends to rely wholly on emotion or else wholly on reason, with the result that his attitude to life becomes unbalanced and if he does not learn wisdom he ends by loving what he should hate and hating what he should love. In his social life he undergoes tension in adapting himself to the needs of others and his tensions increase when he tries to adapt their convenience to his own ambitions. And finally, in his relations with God, when he thinks of God at all, the tensions seem to multiply, between the strident voice of temptation and the still small voice of conscience. As a result of the tensions man grows ever more keenly aware both of his own and his neighbour's needs and of God's claims upon him.

And thus the Law of Tensions leads on to the *Law of Sensitiveness*. In the animal kingdom, over thousands of generations, increasing sensitiveness takes two forms: both a closer awareness of the environment through the senses of sight, hearing, scent and touch, and a wider range of activities, through the development of bodily structure and limbs. In the animal the activities and the awareness are perfectly integrated, through the nervous system.

In man also the growing sensitiveness covers both awareness and activity, but in man they are imperfectly coordinated. As Jesus

said, in his awareness of self, a man often gazes into the mirror of his own mind but then goes away and forgets the picture which he has seen. What can this mean save that he neglects to take any action, neglects to remedy the faults he has seen in himself? Similarly, in his social relationships, the awareness and the activity need to be coordinated. One may see and feel, but neglect to think and act. It is all too easy to pass by on the other side, as did the Priest and the Levite, whereas the Good Samaritan typifies the man in whom awareness at once prompts action.

And the Law of Sensitiveness prescribes a balance also between awareness and activity in man's relations with God. The man who worships God secretly does not always reveal Him in his daily life. His lamp does not always shine steadily and strongly outwards; consciousness of God does not always bear fruit in works for God.

The fact is that sensitiveness, the Creator's gift to His creatures, is by no means an unconditional gift, for its development is conditioned to the degree and extent of the creature's response. All evolutionary progress depends on the cooperation of creature with Creator, and the Law of Sensitiveness thus leads on to a still more basic law, the *Law of Cooperation*. In the inorganic world the cooperation is unconscious, the heavenly bodies providing the forms and functions obedient to divine laws. The cooperation of plants is semi-conscious, that of animals conscious but instinctive. In the world of humanity the cooperation of man with God is self-conscious and therefore less perfect than that of star, plant and animal; and the reason is not far to seek.

Man has a self to lose as well as a self to gain; he is not self-sufficient in the sense in which plant and animal are self-sufficient, for his cooperation with his Creator must become a conscious cooperation if he is to evolve spiritually. The degree and extent of this conscious cooperation vary with his capacity to lift his attention from himself and his own desires to concentrate it upon God and upon God's Will for him, often expressed in terms of the needs of his fellow men and women.

And this cooperation of human creature with Creator has the paradoxical result of a gain to the human self proportional to the surrender of self, simply because human life is not wholly bounded by this world nor are man's powers limited to those natural in man. In entrusting his own needs to God and concentrating his attention not on himself but rather on God's Will for him, man's spiritual powers develop and his cooperation with his Creator deepens and broadens. It becomes purposeful with God's own purposes. Indeed it is no exaggeration to say that the consummation of God's Plan of Creation depends on the perfecting of human cooperation in the working-out of the Plan.

We are thus led from the Law of Cooperation to the *Law of Perfection*, which is the final law implicit in the pattern of Creation. We have already seen this law at work in the evolution of heavenly

bodies attaining a perfection not only of form and motion but also of order in their mutual relationships, and again in the perfection of form and of function in plant and animal life.

When this Law of Perfection is applied to the human race, we find that at the present stage of human evolution the law only covers the natural mechanism of the human body and mind; these have reached by normal evolutionary processes the perfection designed for them. What is still imperfect is the integration of the human ego, its needs and desires, with its bodily and mental mechanism.

For the Law of Perfection is only relevant to each grade of Creation in terms of the grade above it. The perfection of the atom was not attained until one planet emerged comprising all the conditions essential to the maintenance of life. The perfection of the living cell was not attained until one primate emerged revealing all the conditions necessary to the introduction of personality. And the Christian would add that the perfection of humanity only became realizable when one man, Jesus Christ, revealed the characteristics of God's own Perfection.

* * *

One final question remains: How is human perfection to be attained, so far as it is attainable in this life? Every Science has its Technology—what is the Technique which translates into everyday language and action the Science of Living?

It was Jesus who gave the answer. We are all, in our natural states, sick men and women because our inner life of the mind lacks controlled integration; the inner tensions prevent us from solving the external tensions which we experience daily with our fellow men and the unsolved tensions intrude and obtrude, invade and pervade the social, national and international life of humanity.

But there is one tension which is of primary importance, namely the God-man tension which, when solved, holds the key to all other tensions. And the solution is a curious one; it is, quite simply, to look, to face God squarely in the light of the uplifted Christ, to give Him our attention and so to be drawn to Him.

To give one's attention is the initial step towards the solution of all human relationships including man's relations with God; for Love cannot be born until the attention is given, and Love has twofold power—to assimilate and to be assimilated. It is by Love that our characters develop towards the full stature of Christ's character. In loving we use our talents to the uttermost, we rediscover buried talents, we develop talents which we did not know we possessed.

Here, then, is the one certainty in an uncertain world, here is the Technique of Living, in Loving. To concentrate our heart's attention on God Incarnate is to behold God the Father face to face, to assimilate Him and to be assimilated towards His Perfection. For God is Love and to worship Love is to grow in Love; we learn to love Him, to lose all tension with Him and in our love for others to be certain of finding the solutions to our worldly tensions.

Symbol and Reality in History

E. G. LEE

A MAN is at home in his historic environment. Even if he revolts against it and wishes to change it; even if he hates it; nevertheless he is revolting against and hating his home. He has a kind of instinctive relationship with it; there are certain familiarities about it that he never questions; if he questioned everything, down to the minutest detail, he would not be able to live; he has to take something for granted, even if it is only with his blood, and not with his head, in order to recognise his environment. If he could not do this there would be no home and consequently no man.

But a man's historic environment, which is so familiar to him—in a sense an extension of himself—can be familiar only to his time and generation. He can accept almost without thought what will probably be hidden to a future generation. There is a twentieth-century man just as there is a man of the thirteenth century; and it is only by a feat of the imagination that twentieth century man can re-create his distant ancestor. The latter has vanished, and what he instinctively understood in his historic environment has vanished also. The modern has to create out of the bits and pieces left of the thirteenth century what he imagines thirteenth-century man to be. All that is left is something of the home; there are some magnificent pictures on the walls; there are some documents in the cupboards; but the home is more or less in ruins, and it is hard to learn anything of the *life* of the home from the material remnants left behind. True, the cathedrals, buildings and documents are there, and human lineaments and the human spirit speak through them, and modern man, just because he is human, can understand what they say, but the moderns who interpret cannot place themselves amidst the life that has vanished which they try to interpret. All its instinctive reactions, its creation and acceptance in its own home, are no more, and although imagination can do much it cannot create the life as it was. A modern in a medieval costume is self-conscious; if he walked down a modern street in such a costume he would experience additional feelings of self-consciousness. A medieval man belonged to his own clothes as a modern man does to his—and the medieval man belonged to the thoughts, speech, customs and the inexplicable interchange of human communion that he wore as easily as his clothes, as easily as modern man wears his environment with his contemporary clothes. The thirteenth-century man was human, otherwise we should not know him; but his humanity belonged to an environment which for him did not have to be interpreted through the hieroglyphics of human remains. There is a profound difference between immediate life and a later interpretation of it.

How much, in five hundred years time, will men of that future know of this present—know it, that is, in the instinctive unquestioning manner we do? Let one representative word be taken, standing for so much that is taken for granted in the present, the word “Christian.” Catholics, Protestants, Unitarians, Quakers, Jehova’s Witnesses, the members of the Greek Orthodox Church, all the various shades of all the varying beliefs, in one way or another use the word to describe themselves. Some vehemently deny the word to others, but that causes no instinctive upset in the present; life goes on in reasonable calm in the circumstances. No one is halted in his steps by the apparent inconceivable confusion. The Catholic works side by side with the Jehova’s Witness, and it is possible that each may not be aware of the other’s religion—or if they are aware of it, it does not amount to much in the historic environment in which they have to earn their living.

But how can the historian of the future understand this? It may be surmised that in its essence, in the way life is moulded with life, it will, as an actual situation, be beyond his ken. He may try to give a broad description of it; the description conceivably may get near the fact it is trying to describe, indeed perhaps get near to its human meaning—since the historian will be human as well—but its nuances of meaning, its subtleties of interchange of thought, its acceptance of a home that is really a home and not a ruin, will defeat him. The word “Christian” as it is used to-day, and is so familiar, will be impervious to the future historian; he too will be living in history, and history no matter what may be the continuity running through it, is always represented by changing environmental homes. Even the words of endearment, let alone the descriptive words of religion, change subtly in meaning in changing environments. The man of the twenty-fifth century will be as environmentally cut off from this present as this present is cut off from the thirteenth century.

Let the matter be put to another test. The popular—and frequently the not so popular—view of the early growth of Christianity is, even on the most superficial examination, very different from anything that could have occurred. There was, for instance, a man called Paul. Now cathedrals and churches are built in his name. When he is represented in pictorial form he frequently has a halo around his head. Such a man as that, with an aura of supernaturalism about him, could never have existed. The historic man was a natural man; he performed natural functions every day; the men who passed him on his mule or camel probably never took another look at him. There was no Saint Paul in Paul’s day, only a vulnerable man called Paul. None of the semi-divine figures of the Christian tradition were ever as they are represented to be in modern imagination. They could not have been, otherwise they would not have been men and able to live with other men. The notion which the present holds of that past—a notion which is even

different in many ways from that held in the nineteenth century—is entirely created in the present. Behind it, of course, there is tradition, but tradition which undergoes change through creation. In any case, no matter what its source may be, the constructed past of early Christianity, as it is known to-day, never existed.

Another test can be taken from the popular attitude to the Bible. It is a sacred book. It is even sacred in peculiar ways, It is not quite a book; it is something unique, imbedded into our civilisation. The idea of this is also read into the past. The written word, as it is understood in the present, is popularly read into the era when the Bible was finally being formed. Hence arise many of the ideas that now hover around what is called “the Word,” or revelation, of the relationship between the word as it is—with no mystical significance—and the manner in which it is thought it was brought into existence. Yet in the formative years of primitive Christianity the “books” or written word, could not possibly have the same significance as they have to-day. Oral tradition necessarily was important at a time when so few could read and others had little opportunity of doing so. Papias, Bishop of Hieropolis in the second century, is on record that he preferred not to learn the “truth” second hand but by word of mouth. “For I did not suppose that information from books would help me so much as the living and surviving voice.”¹ Who knows? It is one testimony from the past and it sounds an authentic one.

The letters of Paul which have been preserved in fragmentary form (can anyone be sure that all has been preserved which should be preserved to disclose the “thought” of Paul?) could hardly have been regarded and received, in the days when they were first written, as the sacred objects they now are.

In another way it is probable that popular—and not so popular—opinion reads into the early days of Christianity something that was not there at all. The stories about Jesus are all-important in our contemporary Christianity. Yet they may not have been all that important for the first and second generation of Christians. It is difficult for a modern Christian to adjust himself to that thought. But there is considerable evidence for it. Christianity may have spread in the early days without much recourse to the historic Jesus. This idea is summarised by Burkitt, the Cambridge University scholar, in the following way:

“Frankly, I think very few Christians had been instructed in (the Gospel tales in Christendom before Mark’s Gospel was published, i.e. about 65 or 66 A.D.) or even had heard them told. . . . Luke’s patron, ‘the Rt. Hon. Theophilus’ had been instructed in the Christian religion, but there is nothing to suggest that this included any more than the Gospel history that is included in something like the Apostle’s Creed. What Theophilus had been taught was not tales about Jesus. . . .

¹ Eusebius. *Ecclesiastical History*. Loeb, page 293.

"The view against which I am arguing is that in the early days of Christianity, in the first century A.D., Christianity was spread or taught by means of tales about the career of Jesus in Galilee and Judea. . . ."2

It may or may not be true, but in any case dare modernity say without peradventure what happened in the past?

Dare it say so in a wider range of subjects? Something perhaps can be known of the mystery religions, of Judaism, of the secular beliefs that have been recorded, but what all these meant for those who preserved the memories and thoughts in the New Testament no one can truly say. No one can really know why the compilers and writers of the New Testament called Jesus the Son of God. On the whole, since even the earliest days, the meaning has always been an open question allowing degrees and shades of meaning—in spite of dogma. Sufficient it is to say that when modern Christianity begins to interpret primitive Christianity through its own modernity and concepts and intuitions, it brings into being something that never was—save in the twentieth century. Life can never repeat life, no matter how hard it tries; it can only create its own.

Historical scepticism of this sort is necessary to clear away an illusion; the illusion that any historical period in its environmental sense is the real and the only real. Because modern man with his historic sense has seen "history changed"; because he can contrast one period with another and see qualitative differences; because, as it seems, he can exercise his will in history in the sense of transforming his environment as never before; therefore he falls into the supposition that the only real is the history—that is "total history"—in which he appears to live. Yet it is transparent that this history which he thinks is real—this history which includes the second and first centuries of the Christian era interpreted in the twentieth, this thirteenth century reconstructed out of its remains, in a manner of which no one can be certain—this history is seen to be unreal as soon as a moment's thought is given to it. The whole past which seems so real, and is so integral to history regarded as the real, is a recreation by present imagination; imagination working on a certain number of facts—and only a certain number—it is true, but none the less imagination for all that. And it may be concluded that just as the twentieth century study of history has reconstructed and corrected past studies (Toynbee's *Study of History* is a very different presentation of the past from Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* no matter how opinions may differ about its use of fact) so it is certain that the future will reconstruct and transform the twentieth century's study. This too is surely quite clear. The very fact that historic science exists, presupposes that it is working upon something that can yield new knowledge, in this instance new knowledge of the past, and eventually, by very virtue of this fact, it hopes to present a new past. Otherwise why look for new facts

and new interpretations of them? Probably nothing has changed more rapidly in the modern environment than man's reconstruction of his past. Indeed, one of the profoundest revolutions in the modern world has been in the study and concept of history. What is history—that seeming succession of events seen now from different points, from Moscow, Rome, Peking, Chicago, and perhaps very soon, Delhi? There is presumably somewhere, waiting to be discovered, a world history. But what is that? Who is going to discover it? And who is going to comprehend it? This of course does not prevent the assertions that history says this or that; and it does not prevent the theological idea of "God stepping down into history" a couple of millennia ago, and making much to depend upon it.

History, as the real, fades into insubstantiality as soon as the conventional concept of it is broken.

But what of this immediate current history in which we are living, is this real? It may be questioned in one particular. Past, present and future are now held in a certain concept which for convenience's sake, may be called progress. It has a certain spiritual power, for the conviction is reached that the only home for a spiritually developed person is within the reality of this concept. The future beckons, the past is behind, "Forward! over our graves!"

The concept and its emotional impact on the whole can be historically demarcated. It was never known or felt in the eighteenth century as it is in the twentieth. And already it is under challenge. It is apparent that all the looming problems of humanity, population increase, racial conflict, the emotion of nationalism, not to mention others, will not be solved by what the concept, in its own historic environment, presents.

In another aspect the whole idea of pulling down barns to build much bigger and better may pall of itself and produce a reaction of considerable importance to the very existence of the barns themselves.

It may be further questioned whether the idea has all that power in the modern world conventionally given to it. The outer changes of all the various kinds taking place in man's created outer environment springs rather from the "invention of invention" than any conscious intention of changing the environment. The creative life of the inventor is not so much tied up with the idea of progress being the substance of history as with the need for creative activity, largely for its own sake. The great creators in the realms of science and technology do not so much ask themselves what is to happen to history after they have created, or what "truth" or new conclusion, or new discovery, or new embodiment of idea in form, is going to come out of their activity. The manifold creators of the aeroplane in our time did not ask themselves, presumably, so much about the future of mankind or changing history, as about the ideas they were embodying in their machines.

It is this modern creativeness which, probably more than anything else, has transformed the exterior part of man's environmental home, and not what seems so real and emotionally persuasive, the idea of progress.

The latter—not in any sense in terms of reaction—is already being challenged in its role of a primary constituent of modern man's environment. Who can say what will have happened to it in two or three hundred years' time?

What then is the real and what is history's relationship to it?

It is permissible to regard the passing environments of history as the mediums or symbols through which men try to reach after the real. Two illustrations may be given.

One of the great stories of the western civilization is that of Abelard and Heloise. It was created in its details within certain beliefs held in the 12th century. The tragedy, and the greatness in it which has caused it to be remembered, could not have taken place in quite the same way in the twentieth century. Abelard would have been free in a twentieth-century way to marry Heloise if he so wished, and there need have been no tragedy. Yet within the environmental conditions of the time, the whole story—that is from the beginning to the end when Abelard died and Heloise after him—the whole story reached after some nobility of passion that transcended the environmental conditions in which the passion came to life. It affirmed, as may fairly be interpreted, through the historic beliefs which surrounded the couple, that there was more than this. How or in what way perhaps, neither Abelard or Heloise could give a coherent account that sounded real to their own day; but that there was something beyond their historic period which the human spirit could reach, this was implicit in their passion. The environmental home in which they lived was only symbolic, that is temporary and interpretive, to be rejected when this was discovered, for a reality beyond history profounder than the symbol which attempted to interpret it in historic terms. Nothing more is meant by this term reality than something appraised and revealed in action, and perhaps in resulting tragedy, beyond the environment in which the action took place. In other words, history is not all. And if tragedy is to be the interpretation of man's place in history—as some claim—then it may well be found in the conflict caused by man's place in his historic environment and his need to reach beyond it. That reach does not stretch into nothing, otherwise nothing would come of it; there would be no tragedy. There is only tragedy because the historic occasion comes into conflict with something more real than itself. The historic occasion in its beliefs, emotions and concepts, is but symbolic of the real; the symbols change, but the real does not.

Secondly there is never enough in any historic environment—in the idea of progress for instance—to comprehend all that breaks in upon the spirit of man. The fanatical assertion that the immediate, and all that can arise out of it, is all that man can know and needs

to know, wilts against the fact that the immediate, in its environmental forms, is disappearing before our very eyes, and against the fact that the concepts which seem to be a part of it fail to describe what is taking place. The conflict between changing symbols and the nature of the real, the real which man is trying to reach, seems to be adequately given in the constant sense of tragedy that rests upon the modern environment, in spite of everything it has achieved in the historic sense.

Fulfilment is partly reached when the symbol is more nearly adjusted to the real. Frustration is felt when the symbol is mistaken for the real. Freedom is found when the symbols are regarded for what they are, to be discarded when they no longer bring man's spirit to the goal of its desire. And the goal of its desire is probably beyond the actuality of symbol and its effort of interpretation; it lies beyond tragedy when tragedy is essentially comprehended, that is, when the real consciousness of tragedy destroys all notion of the tragic.

This is a plea for the recognition that the environmental home is not everything. Beyond history there is a reality by which history can be understood. Needless to say this is not supernaturalism; for supernaturalism is held in contrast to the natural, and is frequently a spurious duplication of the natural. The real meaning of history is beyond history—however accurate and imaginatively sympathetic the historian may be.

Personal Notes

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John Wm. Rattray (article opposite), a layman of Dundee, has contributed "The Wavering Balance" to Vol. 6, Pt. 1; "The Hollow Oak" to Vol 7, Pt. 1, and foregoing parts of this article in Vol. 9, Pts. 1 and 2.

A Vast Uneasiness

ABOUT PAUL AND PAULINE CHRISTIANITY

PART III*

JOHN WM. RATTRAY

IN two previous essays,¹ the validity of the position awarded to Paul by orthodox Christendom,—*Ecclesia*—was examined. What follows is a brief consideration of what may be called his technique in certain notable utterances traditionally attributed to him, and highly honoured, by orthodox Christendom. This examination is not pursued in a spirit of criticism of a great soul, but of *Ecclesia*, which, to further its own sectarian aims, has delighted to honour or, if expedient, diplomatically to ignore, that to which Paul committed himself in his variety of humours. That Paul shewed by his ardour a surpassing devotion to what he passionately believed, must win him respect, if not admiration. But his zeal often swept him on a tide of emotion into postures of egotism extremely trying to observe. They over-tax credulity, they are suffused with the personal, they tamper with the Teaching of The Master, and thus are mischievous, though with good intention. It was these very faults that made him an excellent posthumous plenipotentiary of *Ecclesia*, and the most was made of him in the establishment of a religious system quite unrelated to the Gospel of the Master who, as we have seen earlier, did not found any ‘church.’

We are indebted to the late Dr. Barnes for much enlightenment and justification of our doubts. Let us look at examples of the Gospel value credited to Paul. *Evil communications corrupt good manners.* (1 Cor. 15:33). Barnes tells us² that this is a “doubtful quotation from Menander” (349-291 B.C.), a poet of the New Comedy at Athens. Paul was speaking about the resurrection. In his exuberance he gives the definite impression that he “fought with beasts at Ephesus.” Barnes says, “As a Roman citizen, he would not have been condemned to face wild beasts in the arena.” It is remarkable that in 1 Cor. 15:5 we find Paul referring to The Master having been seen of the *twelve*, after the crucifixion. Barnes submits that these passages were not by Paul but an enthusiastic admirer. Nevertheless they are accepted as “the Word of God.” *In Him we live and move and have our being* (Acts 17:28) has achieved superlative fame for Paul’s spiritual insight. Barnes tells us³ that they are, in fact, words from a poem entitled *Minos* by Epimenides who

* Several requests have been received that we should fulfil our original plan of publishing a third and concluding part of Mr. Rattray’s critical assessment of Paul. We do so now with apologies for the delay. Personal note p89.—ED.

1 Vol. 9, Pts. 1 and 2 (Nos. 25 and 26).

2 *The Rise of Christianity*, E. W. Barnes, pp. 32 and 228.

3 *Op. cit.*, pp. 32 and 115.

referred to Cretans as "always liars, evil beasts, slow bellies" (*Titus* 1. 12) which are quoted by Paul, not without relish. But "In Him we live . . ." is habitually credited to Paul, who in this case used it in an exhortation to "mine own son." *For we are also his offspring*, is a phrase "to be found in a poem of Aratus of Soli . . . a fellow-provincial of Paul"⁴—a poet and an astronomer who flourished about 270 B.C. and who seems to have been respected by Cicero and Virgil. There is no charge of plagiarism here. In our own day we quote whole passages so well-known that we assume everyone's knowledge of the source, and Paul's biographers may have been as innocent as Paul himself may have been, but the Churches allow all this to be presented as Paul's own and exalt him accordingly. Of *Ephesians*, the scholars have observed that neither its vocabulary nor style are like Paul's; Barnes goes so far as to express doubt as to Paul's authorship of some nine of the works attributed to him. But Barnes is not alone. Through the writings of students, even when apologists, is heard the shrill note of recurring doubt. In the work of Bertram Clogg we find crumbs of foreign matter—like sand in a watch—as to what is Pauline—"If we have"; and, "almost certainly fictitious"; and (Barnes again) "Paul is a perplexing figure."

All this combines to rob us of reliability. For example, writing of the Pastoral Epistles, Clogg⁵ concedes the possibility that "the amanuensis (*sic*) may have had a larger share in the composition", and one echoes in dismay "the amanuensis'!" Where has "The Word of God" got to now? But Clogg rounds off the matter complacently—or naïvely—and proceeds to smoother water. "We may conclude with Dr. Locke⁶ 'If they were not written as they stand by St. Paul, they probably (*sic*) incorporate some notes of his, the whole written by one who knew himself a devoted follower of St. Paul . . . and this attempt was accepted by the Church as true to the memory of what St. Paul had taught'." That will satisfy whom it does satisfy, but the deluded layman is left unhappily speculating as to just how much of what was "accepted" by *Ecclesia*, is now presented as The Word not only of Paul but of God! The laity are not given any inkling as to the 'inexactitudes' on which they are invited, and even required, to rely as divine truth. Barnes declares⁷ that "There are signs that early tracts or flysheets, written one or two generations after Paul, but ascribed to him, have gone to make up the very varied chapters of *I Corinthians*— . . . Few scholars believe his speech at Athens to be genuine." Here is not the place to examine in detail the Pauline account of The Last Supper, but it is highly relevant to deprecate the special value given it by *Ecclesia*, for the reason that Paul was not there, and that

⁴ Barnes, p. 207, *op. cit.*

⁵ *An introduction to the N.T.*, Univ. of London Press, p. 118.

⁶ *Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles*, Internat. Critical Commentary, p. xxxi.

⁷ Pp. 228 and 295, *op. cit.*

it conflicts with the versions of those who were presumably closer to the original tradition. Yet it is Paul's version that is read from thousands of pulpits as the very "Word of God," which is actually the prefatory expression habitually used by Scottish clergymen. Paul's possible informants are not even alluded to!⁸ Such uncertainties, indicative of the vastly more uncovered by the process of scientific deduction and scholarship ought not to be glossed over by honest minds.

Is it to be seriously maintained that *I Cor.* 13, one of the most impressive and beautiful passages in Holy Writ, was the creation of Saul of Tarsus—Paul of the Damascus road? Read again the Paean to Divine Love for which Paul is given credit by *Ecclesia*. This renowned and beauteous exhortation on Love Divine, with its winsome quality of wistful yet penetrating rumination, is utterly unlike anything else that anyone has had the temerity to attribute to Paul. Compared with any of the Epistles it is not even distant kin, suffused as they are with his habitual robust pontifical style and diction. It is impossible to accept that these came from the same heart and mind. It is remarkable that, in all Paul's traffic in words as to his own teaching, he never quotes the very essence of The Master's pronouncements on Love: the two great Commandments, of which Love is the sole theme. (*Matt.* 22. 37-39; *Mark* 12. 30-31). Was his conversance so extremely slight? Was he aware of them? Or is there another reason? He never quoted The Lord's Prayer; he doesn't acknowledge even Moses' anticipation (*Lev.* 19:18).⁹ It cannot be credibly maintained, despite exhortations here and there, that Paul's general comportment was that of one who was an authority on love, human or Divine. On the contrary, what has been observed and commented crisply by Barnes is that Paul was "primarily concerned to defend his own authority" (it might be more accurate to say his claimed authority) though to the Churches he did speak with the tongues of men and of angels and evoked love from that quarter. His confused ideas as to love are well exemplified in *Ephesians* 5:25, "Husbands! love your wives even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it." It is surely permissible to comment, *en passant*, on the inexcusable implication that 'Christ' had any 'church,' as contemporarily understood, or that it was for it that he suffered crucifixion. This is the unadulterated Paulinism that has endeared Paul to the theologians of *Ecclesia*. . . . No! In the Paean there is not any taint of the torrential flow of Pauline declamation. It is much more in the vein of "Like as a Father pitieth his children," a gentle appeal as by a most dear Guardian of our eternal weal. Who, then, did write it?

Scholars agree, reluctantly, gladly, or matter-of-factly as to the existence of other sources, of which *Ecclesia* has done its utmost to keep long-suffering laity in ignorance: the Didache and "Q."

⁸ "This do in remembrance of me" does not appear in the three synoptic gospels. In *John* there is no record at all.

⁹ Nor Deut. 6:5, still more relevant.

As to "Q," those who contributed, or the one who wrote it, must have been impressively near to the Master Himself. It is known that there were in possession of the Jerusalem Brotherhood certain most precious records which must virtually have been 'Annals' of the Master's Life and Teaching. Previously we have drawn attention to two vital facts: that Paul, like many educated Jews, had an exceedingly retentive memory, and that, despite his excessive protestations of not having learned anything from any man, he must have gathered much grist for his mill when he sojourned with James and Peter, in Jerusalem. What did they talk about if not of The Master? Moreover, can there be any reasonable doubt that, despite his chagrined protestations as to unique endowment, Paul succeeded in getting access to these very records? Embalmed there would be the very distillations of The Master's utterances and cameos of his comportment. It is an insult to common intelligence to ask us to believe that a man with the sharpened appetite of Paul did not devour the contents of such a cornucopia. These records must have been of completely engrossing interest to the ambitious neophyte who had the wit as well as the education to perceive their superlative value. "Fifteen days"!—why a memory such as his could lay away a whole *corpus* of these treasures. What a fortnight it must have been for a man of his avidity! We may reasonably envy him. We can see him poring over them, packing the contents away in his remarkable storehouse, rejoicing as one who has run and won a race! We need not charge him with vulgar plagiarism, but we have seen his habitual adroitness in quoting without acknowledgment—as many a man has done since; but let us not muddy the wells of truth with the rod of prejudice. It is submitted that it was in these records that he got all that is best in his writings, for they were, in fact, as near as we shall ever get to The Master himself by Paul's agency. Is it not here, and in this, that for one of his legal mind, there exists a degree of justification for his claim that he was not indebted to any man for his knowledge of The Master's teaching?

But he dared not tell, and there was no articulate challenge then. He had been denied the privilege so greatly coveted by him, of "being with Him" in corporeal, undeniable fact: he could be the first to make a record of his own, and he did, stepping in front of the less sophisticated but more authentic apostles.¹⁰ To the denizens of *Ecclesia*, Paul was something heaven-sent. Did they challenge his authenticity? They *canonized* him. And their successors in office raised him to something like a fourth person in the godhead. But Paul must not be blamed for that, though it was an act of exuberance after his own heart.

But there is further evidence available as to Paul's not being the inspired writer of the Paean. The man who wrote "If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels and have not love," could not have harboured the deplorable thoughts which Paul had about

10 *vid. The greatest Faith ever known*, Fulton Oursler.

women. It is remarkable to the point of astonishment that, in spite of his incorrigible depreciation of women, they remained so loyal to the Churches that, if they withdrew, the Churches would wilt into dull semi-monastic nothingness. It can only be because they do not care the proverbial pin what Paul said about them, and very much because of the utterly different attitude of The Master—ever gracious, kind, compassionate and charitable even to those deemed ‘fallen,’ who incurred odium through living up to his own standards and through the exercise of his capacity for forgiveness. . . . We do not know when Paul was born, and Dr. Barnes suggested it was probably most kind not to enquire with thoroughness. Let it be left at that, though it could easily have relevance. As far as can be learned, his was not a winsome exterior, and there is little doubt that he suffered from an incipient limitation as to which he wins sincere sympathy. According to his admirer and advocate, Oursler, he was little more than “three cubits in height (under five feet), broad-shouldered, sinewy, and graceful in spite of a prematurely balding head and the early grey hair that encroached on his close-knit eyebrows and thick beard in his thirtieth year. . . . The Galatians took him for a god,” for it is said he was quite an athlete. But he seems to have been encumbered by faulty vision—possibly symbolic—and to have been grateful for the help of an amanuensis. To the Galatians (6. 11) he draws attention to his having written by his own hand. Moffat gives us, “See what big letters I make”—a wistful touch. And then alas! there was the “thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me” as to which I “besought the Lord thrice that it might depart from me” (*II Cor.* 12. 7-8). There is much about him that wins our compassion; a perplexing character, often in a seethe of contradiction, defeating himself by his own difficult make-up, not winsome but in need of much loving. It is common observation that men who are short in stature are apt to behave somewhat in advance of merit, as an over-compensation. He may be pictured then bald of head even at thirty (Oursler, *op. cit.*), grey at the temples, hirsute on jaw and chin, four feet ten in height, shaggy, wiry, short-sighted, full of energy. Secretly envious of the men who had known the Master intimately, he is under a sense of frustration while bursting with ideas. Above all, he is obsessed by the belief that he was peculiarly the Lord’s anointed, tends greatly to impatience and to being his own criterion, yet oscillates between the boastful and the ruminatively humble. At the back of it all a gnaw of inferiority that often accounts for eccentricity. And was there something in connection with his birth that rankled? Amongst Jews, the usual attitude is that women’s chief interest for men is not only as females but as potential wives, “subject” to their husbands, a position very properly repudiated by ‘Gentile’ women. (Israel Zangwill was a notable exception). To read the Epistles attributed to Paul is to be forced to see his antipathetic attitude towards women—always, to him, inferior. It is widely assumed that

he was not married, but re-read *I Cor.* 9 : 5: "Have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as other Apostles, and as the brethren of the Lord and Cephas?" "Sister" could be ambiguous. Moffat renders the phrase "Have we no right to travel with a Christian wife." It is certainly arresting, and Barnes felt it conclusive that Peter was married. He quotes Ignatius: "Peter and Paul and the rest of the Apostles that were married men." It is true that the Ignatius letters have been argued about, but so has a great deal as to Paul yet accepted by *Ecclesia*; and when they deliberately try to conceal, they must not complain at what is uncovered. In *I Cor.* 7. 5-7 his expressions could be either those of a celibate, a man married, or a widower, but again come the scholars who say that much of the whole book was by writers other than Paul; but the Churches do not tell us that either. In *Philippians* 6: 1-5 the word "Yokefellow" is used, some think with significance, and it was used by Clement of Alexandria (according to Eusebius and also Barnes) thus: "... Paul himself does not hesitate in one of his epistles to address his wife (lit. yokefellow) whom for the greater success of his mission, he did not take with him."¹¹ Nearly all his utterances about women have a tortured tang, and are often offensive. Even his champion, Oursler, who travelled and burrowed and pondered with exceeding diligence, could write, "Christians everywhere were beginning to call Paul a woman-hater. They said he despised females. . . . He was making himself very unpopular with women."¹²

According to the old law, widowhood was deemed a condition just less than shameful—as in Hinduism, though there they burnt them. It was lawful for widows to marry, and the law went further than the deceased-wife's-sister in reverse, for it extended to other relations because the Jews were inordinately clannish and the Family fortunes must be kept within the Family of the first husband.¹³ But these did not please Paul. What might be his excuse for "Widows that are widows indeed"? (*I Tim.* 5 *passim*). A widow is not to be received into the fellowship under sixty nor the widow of more than one husband. She must be of good repute, have brought up children, washed the saints' feet. "But the younger widows refuse, for when they have begun to wax wanton against Christ"—what? What is their crime likely to be? "They will marry, having damnation because they cast off their first faith." And they acquire bad habits, says Paul, "Gadding about from one house to another—and not merely idle, but gossips and busybodies repeating things they have no right to mention," is how Moffat expresses it; Paul to be *the* authority! And he actually goes so far as to say "For some are

¹¹ P. 183, *op. cit.* Other refs: The Concise Oxford Dictionary gives "Partner in marriage: work, etc." Moffat: "My true comrade." For "Comrade" the C.O.D. gives it a French source: *Camarade* ex Spanish—a Chamber mate, and Roubaud's French Dictionary includes 'female companion.'

¹² Oursler, p. 317, *op. cit.*

¹³ Consider Ruth and Boaz: Tamar and Er, plus Omar, and a contemplated third in Shelah.

already turned aside after Satan." According to Paul, these wantons *must marry* for—here it is again, wives are to submit themselves to their husbands. Then follows a most amazing simile "as unto the Lord, for the husband is head of the wife even as Christ is head of the Church." (*Ephes.* 5. 22). Such a combination of impertinence, impiety, and inaccuracy (for it must be reiterated that the Master did not found any church) is surely unique, and so outrageous that, while its existence must be noted, it may not be given a place even for discussion. Only minds with judgement paralysed by fanaticism or eccentricity could give it any but museum value. But there it is, offered us as an inspired utterance of a saint, and the word of God! To Titus, Paul ranks wives with servants, those from whom obedience is required in "subjection." (R.V. *Titus* 2. 5 and 9). In *I Timothy* 2: 9 *et seq.*) women are to be "shamefast" (R.V.) or "shamefaced" (AV), and to make everything absolutely plain, "I (*sic*) permit not (RV) suffer not (AV) a woman to teach." Then he excels himself again: "Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression." So Adam, without even the excuse of being deceived; was not in transgression." How odd in God to expel both! In *I Cor.* 7: 1 and 2, he avoids impiety, but woman is still the snare. "It is good for a man not to touch a woman, nevertheless to avoid fornication let every man have his own wife and every woman her own husband." Then there is the famous—or infamous, "It is better to marry than to burn." In youth, this meant to us, 'than to go to hell'; but in 1913 Moffat gave us "than to be aflame with passion."

On and on he went, women an incessant provocative gnaw at his heart; bitter, an unreasoning grudge. Was it due to his mother, his wife, a wanton in his early life, or the canker of knowing that women did not take to him? Or was it the weariness of a malady that soured him? He writhes and cries and we feel compassion for him, but he is discredited by it all as an authority on Love. He speaks with the tongue of a certain type of man, but not of any angel. On this subject he is "as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal." Was it possibly in a conscientious man the coming to the surface of the war—as in so many men—between the urgencies of the body and the call of the Spirit? In him it seemed to reduce marriage to a device for what is known as 'keeping young people out of trouble,' regularisation in preference to promiscuity. In this, his views were too much even for *Ecclesia* to accept. They went back to Cana of Galilee, but they still retain all this muddy eccentricity of Paul as the word of God, and maintain it as suitable for worship in sanctuary and family circle, and to be made use of by church officials who have flouted his exhortations. Paul's attitude to women was a sustained flagrant contradiction of the attitude and consistent guidance of The Master—the only teaching that is of importance to Christians. All this is submitted as conclusive evidence that Paul could not have been the author of the Paean to Divine Love in the thirteenth chapter of the *First Epistle to the Corinthians*.